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THE WORKS

OF

CHARLES LAMB.

THE

WORKS

OF

CHARLES LAMB.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

A NEW EDITION.

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CHAPTER XVII.

[1829, 1830.]

LETTERS TO ROBINSON, PROCTER, BARTON, WILSON, GILMAN, WORDSWORTH, AND DYER.

HAVING decided on residing entirely at Enfield, Lamb gave up Colebrooke Cottage, and took what he described in a notelet to me as "an odd-looking gambogish-colored house," at Chase-side, Enfield. The situation was far from picturesque, for the opposite side of the road only presented some middling tenements, two dissenting chapels, and a public-house decorated with a swinging sign of a Rising Sun; but the neighboring field-walks were pleasant, and the country, as he liked to say, quite as good as Westmoreland.

He continued occasional contributions to the New Monthly, especially the series of "Popular Fallacies;" wrote short articles in the "Athæneum;" and a great many acrostics on the names of his friends. He had now a neighbor in Mr. Serjeant Wilde, to whom he was introduced by Mr. Burney, and whom he held in high esteem, though Lamb cared nothing for forensic eloquence, and thought very little of eloquence of any

kind; which, it must be confessed, when printed, is the most vapid of all reading. What political interest could not excite, personal regard produced in favor of his new friend; and Lamb supplied several versified squibs and snatches of electioneering songs to grace Wilde's contests at Newark. With these slender avocations his life was dull, and only a sense of duty induced him to persist in absence from London.

The following letter was written in acknowledgment of a parcel sent to Miss Lamb, comprising (what she had expressed a wish to have) a copper coal-scoop, and a pair of elastic spectacles, accompanied by a copy of "Pamela," which having been borrowed and supposed to be lost, had been replaced by another in Lamb's library.

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"Enfield, Feb. 27th, 1829.

Dear R., — Expectation was alert on the receipt of your strange-shaped present, while yet undisclosed from its fusc envelope. Some said, 'tis a *viol da Gamba*, others pronounced it a fiddle; I, myself, hoped it a liqueur case, pregnant with *eau-de-vie* and such odd nectar. When midwifed into daylight, the gossips were at a loss to pronounce upon its species. Most took it for a marrow-spoon, an apple-scoop, a banker's guinea-shovel; at length its true scope appeared, its drift, to save the backbone of my sister stooping to scuttles. A philanthropic intent, borrowed, no doubt, from some of the Colliers. You save people's backs one way, and break 'em again by loads of obligation. The spectacles are delicate and Vulcanian. No lighter

texture than their steel did the cuckoldy blacksmith frame to catch Mrs. Vulcan and the Captain in. For ungalled forehead, as for back unbursten, you have Mary's thanks. Marry, for my own peculium of obligation, 'twas supererogatory. A second part of Pamela was enough in conscience. Two Pamelas in a house are too much, without two Mr. B.'s to reward 'em.

"Mary, who is handselling her new aerial perspectives upon a pair of old worsted stockings trod out in Cheshunt lanes, sends her love: I, great good-liking. Bid us a personal farewell before you see the Vatican.

"CHARLES LAMB."

The following letter to his friend, who so prosperously combines conveyancing with poetry, is a fair sample of Lamb's elaborate and good-natured fictions. It is hardly necessary to say, that the reference to a coolness between him and two of his legal friends, is part of the fiction.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Jan. 19th, 1829.

"My dear Procter, — I am ashamed not to have taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been pure invention. But jokes are not suspected in Bœotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn, and cattle, and Waltham markets. Besides, I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides, but

Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom, at present, I am on the best of terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the lifetime of my brother, in which I am named sole executor, by which she bequeathes forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under covert baron, unknown to my brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee-simple, recoverable by fine; invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty; subject to leet and quitrent; in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden, the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seemed entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body, that should not be born of his wife, for it seems by the law in India, natural children can recover. They have put the cause into Exchequer process here, removed by *certiorari* from the native courts; and the question is, whether I should, as executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove it to the Supreme Sessions, at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the Privy Council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a case like it in chap. 170, sec. 5, in 'Fearn's Contingent Remainders.' Pray read it over with him dispassionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate *in usum;* enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seised, &c.

"I had another favor to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings. A few lines of verse for a young friend's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines — make 'em eight — signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be 'headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having albums.' I fled hither to escape the albumean persecution, and had not been in my new house twenty-four hours, when the daughter of the next house came in with a friend's album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. If I take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will albums be. New Holland has albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request the ten lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast, what you admire. The lines may come before the law question, as that cannot be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter, pray resend it me, as a monumental token of my stupidity."

Lamb was as unfortunate in his communications with the annuals, as unhappy in the importunities of the fair owners of albums. His favorite pieces were omitted; and a piece not his, called "The Widow," was, by a license of friendship, which Lamb forgave, inserted in one of them. He thus complains of these grievances

in a letter which he wrote on the marriage of the daughter of a friend to a great theoretical chemist.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Jan. 22nd, 1829.

"Rumor tells us that Miss —— is married. Who is ——? Have I seen him at Montacutes? I hear he is a great chemist. I am sometimes chemical myself. A thought strikes me with horror. Pray heaven he may not have done it for the sake of trying chemical experiments upon her, — young female subjects are so scarce. An't you glad about Burke's case! We may set off the Scotch murders against the Scotch novels. Hare, the Great Unhanged.

"M. B. is richly worth your knowing. He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder, on which an angel or two is still climbing, and some, alas! descending. Did you see a sonnet of mine in Blackwood's last? Curious construction! Elaborata facilitas! And now I'll tell. 'Twas written for 'The Gem,' but the editors declined it, on the plea that it would *shock all mothers;* so they published 'The Widow' instead. I am born out of time. I have no conjecture about what the present world calls delicacy. I thought 'Rosamund Gray' was a pretty modest thing. Hessey assures me that the world would not bear it. I have lived to grow into an indecent character. When my sonnet was rejected I exclaimed, 'Hang the age, I will write for antiquity!'

"*Erratum* in sonnet. — Last line but something, for tender, read tend. The Scotch do not know our law terms; but I find some remains of honest, plain,

old writing lurking there still. They were not so mealy-mouthed as to refuse my verses. Maybe 'tis their oatmeal.

"Blackwood sent me 20*l.* for the drama. Somebody cheated me out of it next day; and my new pair of breeches, just sent home, cracking at first putting on, I exclaimed, in my wrath, 'All tailors are cheats, and all men are tailors.' Then I was better. C. L."

The next contains Lamb's thanks for the verses he had begged for Miss Isola's album. They comprehended a compliment turning on the words Isola Bella.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"The comings in of an incipient conveyancer are not adequate to the receipt of three twopenny post non-paids in a week. Therefore, after this, I condemn my stub to long and deep silence, or shall awaken it to write to lords. Lest those raptures in this honeymoon of my correspondence, which you avow for the gentle person of my Nuncio, after passing through certain natural grades, as Love, Love and Water, Love with the chill off, then subsiding to that point which the heroic suitor of his wedded dame, the noble-spirited Lord Randolph in the play, declares to be the ambition of his passion, a reciprocation of 'complacent kindness,' — should suddenly plump down (scarce staying to bait at the mid point of indifference, so hungry it is for distaste) to a loathing and blank aversion, to the rendering probable such counter expressions as this, — 'Hang that infernal two-penny postman,' (words which make the not yet glutted inamorato 'lift up his hands

and wonder who can use them.') While, then, you are not ruined, let me assure thee, O thou above the painter, and next only under Giraldus Cambrensis, the most immortal and worthy to be immortal Barry, thy most ingenious and golden cadences do take my fancy mightily. But tell me, and tell me truly, gentle swain, is that Isola Bella a true spot in geographical denomination, or a floating Delos in thy brain. Lurks that fair island in verity in the bosom of Lake Maggiore, or some other with less poetic name, which thou hast Cornwallized for the occasion. And what if Maggiore itself be but a coinage of adaptation? Of this, pray resolve me immediately, for my albumess will be catechized on this subject; and how can I prompt her? Lake Leman I know, and Lemon Lake (in a punch-bowl) I have swum in, though those lymphs be long since dry. But Maggiore may be in the moon. Unsphinx this riddle for me, for my shelves have no gazetteer."

The following letters contain a noble instance of Lamb's fine consideration, and exquisite feeling in morality.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Jan. 29th, 1829.

"When Miss —— was at Enfield, which she was in summer-time, and owed her health to its sun and genial influences, she visited (with young lady-like impertinence) a poor man's cottage that had a pretty baby (O the yearnling!), gave it fine caps and sweetmeats. On a day, broke into the parlor our two maids uproarious. 'O ma'am, who do you think Miss —— has been

working a cap for?' 'A child,' answered Mary, in true Shandean female simplicity. 'It's the man's child as was taken up for sheep-stealing.' Miss —— was staggered, and would have cut the connection, but by main force I made her go and take her leave of her protégée. I thought, if she went no more, the Abactor or Abactor's wife (vide Ainsworth) would suppose she had heard something; and I have delicacy for a sheep-stealer. The overseers actually overhauled a mutton-pie at the baker's (his first, last, and only hope of mutton-pie), which he never came to eat, and thence inferred his guilt. Per occasionem cujus, I framed the sonnet; observe its elaborate construction. I was four days about it.

THE GYPSY'S MALISON.

"Suck, baby, suck! mother's love grows by giving,
Drain the sweet founts that only thrive by wasting;
Black manhood comes, when riotous guilty living
Hands thee the cup that shall be death in tasting.
Kiss, baby, kiss! mother's lips shine by kisses,
Choke the warm breath that else would fall in blessings;
Black manhood comes, when turbulent guilty blisses
Tend thee the kiss that poisons 'mid caressings.
Hang, baby, hang! mother's love loves such forces,
Strain the fond neck that bends still to thy clinging;
Black manhood comes, when violent lawless courses
Leave thee a spectacle in rude air swinging."
So sang a wither'd beldam energetical,
And bann'd the ungiving door with lips prophetical.'

"Barry, study that sonnet. It is curiously and perversely elaborate. 'Tis a choking subject, and therefore the reader is directed to the structure of it. See you? and was this a fourteener to be rejected by a trumpery annual? forsooth, 'twould shock all mothers; and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, be hanged! as if mothers were such sort of logicians

as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility (or capacity of being hanged, if the judge pleases) of every infant born with a neck on. Oh B. C. my whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it?) at this cursed, canting, unmasculine age!"

There is a little Latin letter about the same time to the same friend.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"Feb. 2nd, 1829.

"Facundissime Poeta! quanquam istiusmodi epitheta oratoribus potiùs quam poetis attinere facilè scio — tamen, facundissime!

"Commoratur nobiscum jamdiu, in agro Enfeldiense, scilicet, leguleius futurus, illustrissimus Martinus Burneius, otium agens, negotia nominalia, et officinam clientum vacuam, paululum fugiens. Orat, implorat te — nempe, Martinus — ut si (quòd Dii faciant) fortè fortunâ, absente ipso, advenerit tardus cliens, eum certiorem feceris per literas hûc missas. Intelligisne? an me Anglicè et barbarice ad te hominem perdoctum scribere oportet? C. AGNUS."

"Si status de franco tenemento datur avo, et in eodem facto si mediate vel immediate datur *hæredibus vel hæredibus corporis dicti avi*, postrema hæc verba sunt Limitationis non Perquisitionis.

"Dixi CARLAGNULUS."

An allusion to Rogers, worthy of both, occurs in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"June 3rd, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,—To get out of home themes, have you seen Southey's 'Dialogues?' His lake descriptions, and the account of his library at Keswick, are very fine. But he needed not have called up the ghost of More to hold the conversations with; which might as well have passed between A. and B., or Caius and Lucius. It is making too free with a defunct Chancellor and Martyr.

"I feel as if I had nothing further to write about. O! I forget the prettiest letter I ever read, that I have received from 'Pleasures of Memory' Rogers, in acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him on the loss of his brother.

"It is too long to transcribe, but I hope to show it you some day, as I hope some time again to see you, when all of us are well. Only it ends thus, 'We were nearly of an age (he was the elder); he was the only person in the world in whose eyes I always appeared young.'"

What a lesson does the following read to us from one who, while condemned to uninteresting industry, thought happiness consisted in an affluence of time!

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Enfield Chase-side, Saturday, 25th July, A. D., 1829, 11 A. M.

"There—a fuller, plumper, juicier date never dropt from Idumean palm. Am I in the date-ive case now? if not, a fig for dates, which is more than a date is

worth. I never stood much affected to these limitary specialities. Least of all, since the date of my super-annuation.

'What have I with time to do?
Slaves of desks, 't was meant for you.'
* * * * * *

But town, with all my native hankering after it, is not what it was. The streets, the shops are left, but all old friends are gone. And in London I was frightfully convinced of this as I passed houses and places, empty caskets now. I have ceased to care almost about anybody. The bodies I cared for are in graves, or dispersed. My old clubs, that lived so long, and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. When I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing Cross, 'twas heavy unfeeling rain, and I had nowhere to go. Home have I none, and not a sympathizing house to turn to in the great city. Never did the waters of heaven pour down on a forlorner head. Yet I tried ten days at a sort of a friend's house, but it was large and straggling,—one of the individuals of my old long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant companions, that have tumbled to pieces, into dust and other things: and I got home on Thursday, convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. And to make me more alone, our ill-tempered maid is gone, who, with all her airs, was yet a home-piece of furniture, a record of better days; the young thing that has succeeded her is good and attentive, but she is nothing. And I have no one here to talk over old matters with. Scolding and quarrelling have something of familiarity, and a community of interest; they imply acquaint-

ance; they are of resentment, which is of the family of dearness.

"I can neither scold nor quarrel at this insignificant implement of household services; she is less than a cat, and just better than a deal dresser. What I can do, and do over-do, is to walk; but deadly long are the days, these summer all-day days, with but a half hour's candle-light, and no fire-light. I do not write, tell your kind inquisitive Eliza, and can hardly read. In the ensuing 'Blackwood' will be an old rejected farce of mine, which may be new to you, if you see that same medley. 'Tis cold work authorship, without something to puff one into fashion. Could you not write something on Quakerism, for Quakers to read, but nominally addressed to Non-Quakers, explaining your dogmas — waiting on the Spirit — by the analogy of human calmness and patient waiting on the judgment? I scarcely know what I mean, but to make Non-Quakers reconciled to your doctrines, by showing something like them in mere human operations; but I hardly understand myself, so let it pass for nothing. I pity you for overwork, but, I assure you, no work is worse. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food. I bragged formerly that I could not have too much time. I have a surfeit. With few years to come, the days are wearisome. But weariness is not eternal. Something will shine out to take the load off that flags me, which is at present intolerable. I have killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inchmeal just now. But the snake is vital. Well: I shall write merrier anon. 'Tis the present copy of my countenance I send, and to complain is a little to alleviate. May you enjoy yourself

as far as the wicked world will let you, and think that you are not quite alone, as I am! Health to Lucia, and to Anna, and kind remembrances.

"Your forlorn C. L."

The cares of housekeeping pressed too heavily on Miss Lamb, and her brother resolved to resign the dignity of a housekeeper for the independence of a lodger. A couple of old dwellers in Enfield, hard by his cottage, had the good fortune to receive them. Lamb refers to the change in the following letter, acknowledging the receipt of Wilson's "Life of De Foe," in which a criticism from his pen was inserted, embodying the sentiments which he had expressed some years before.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"Enfield, 15th November, 1829.

"My dear Wilson, — I have not opened a packet of unknown contents for many years, that gave me so much pleasure as when I disclosed your three volumes. I have given them a careful perusal, and they have taken their degree of classical books upon my shelves. De Foe was always my darling, but what darkness was I in as to far the larger part of his writings! I have now an epitome of them all. I think the way in which you have done the 'Life' the most judicious you could have pitched upon. You have made him tell his own story, and your comments are in keeping with the tale. Why, I never heard of such a work as 'the Review.' Strange that in my stall-hunting days I never so much as lit upon an odd volume of it. This circumstance looks as if they were never of any great circulation.

But I may have met with 'em, and not knowing the prize, overpast 'em. I was almost a stranger to the whole history of Dissenters in those reigns, and picked my way through that strange book the 'Consolidator' at random. How affecting are some of his personal appeals: what a machine of projects he set on foot, and following writers, have picked his pocket of the patents! I do not understand whereabouts in Roxana he himself left off. I always thought the complete-tourist-sort of description of the town she passes through on her last embarkation miserably unseasonable, and out of place. I knew not they were spurious. Enlighten me as to where the apocryphal matter commences. I, by accident, can correct one A. D., 'Family Instructor,' vol. ii. 1718; you say his first volume had then reached the fourth edition; now I have a fifth, printed for Eman Matthews, 1717. So have I plucked one rotten date, or rather picked it up where it had inadvertently fallen, from your flourishing date-tree, the Palm of Engaddi. I may take it for my pains. I think yours a book which every public library must have, and every English scholar should have. I am sure it has enriched my meagre stock of the author's works. I seem to be twice as opulent. Mary is by my side just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. Colburn will be quite jealous. I was a little disappointed at my 'Ode to the Treadmill' not finding a place, but it came out of time. The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd, that never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval I should nearly have said the same things. But I shall always feel happy in having my name go down

any how with De Foe's, and that of his historiographer. I promise myself, if not immortality, yet diuturnity of being read in consequence. We have both had much illness this year; and feeling infirmities and fretfulness grow upon us, we have cast off the cares of housekeeping, sold off our goods, and commenced boarding and lodging with a very comfortable, old couple next door to where you found us. We use a sort of common table. Nevertheless, we have reserved a private one for an old friend; and when Mrs. Wilson and you revisit Babylon, we shall pray you to make it yours for a season. Our very kindest remembrances to you both.

"From your old friend and *fellow-journalist* now in *two instances*, C. LAMB."

"Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of De Foe's Novels in 'the Edinbro.' I wish I had health and spirits to do it. Hone I have not seen, but I doubt not he will be much pleased with your performance. I very much hope you will give us an account of Dunton, &c. But what I should more like to see would be a life and times of Bunyan. Wishing health to you, and long life to your healthy book, again I subscribe me,

"Yours in verity, C. L."

About the same time, the following letter was written, alluding to the same change.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Chase-side, Enfield, 26th Oct. 1829.

"Dear Gilman, — Allsop brought me your kind message yesterday. How can I account for having not visited Highgate this long time? Change of place seemed to have changed me. How grieved I was to hear in what indifferent health Coleridge has been, and I not to know of it! A little school divinity, well applied, may be healing. I send him honest Tom of Aquin; that was always an obscure great idea to me: I never thought or dreamed to see him in the flesh, but t'other day I rescued him from a stall in Barbican, and brought him off in triumph. He comes to greet Coleridge's acceptance, for his shoe-latchets I am unworthy to unloose. Yet there are pretty pro's and con's, and such unsatisfactory learning in him. Commend me to the question of etiquette — '*utrum annunciatio debuerit fieri per angelum*' — *Quæst.* 30, *Articulus* 2. I protest, till now I had thought Gabriel a fellow of some mark and likelihood, not a simple esquire, as I find him. Well, do not break your lay brains, nor I neither, with these curious nothings. They are nuts to our dear friend, whom hoping to see at your first friendly hint that it will be convenient, I end with begging our very kindest loves to Mrs. Gilman. We have had a sorry house of it here. Our spirits have been reduced till we were at hope's end what to do. Obliged to quit this house, and afraid to engage another, till in extremity, I took the desperate resolve of kicking house and all down, like Bunyan's pack; and here we are in a new life at board and lodging, with an honest couple our neighbors. We have ridded ourselves of the cares

of dirty acres; and the change, though of less than a week, has had the most beneficial effects on Mary already. She looks two years and a half younger for it. But we have had sore trials.

"God send us one happy meeting! — Yours faithfully, C. LAMB."

The first result of the experiment was happy, as it brought improved health to Miss Lamb; to which Lamb refers in the following letter to his Suffolk friend, who had announced to him his appointment as assignee under a bankruptcy.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"December 8th, 1829.

"My dear B. B., — You are very good to have been uneasy about us, and I have the satisfaction to tell you, that we are both in better health and spirits than we have been for a year or two past; I may say, than we have been since we have been at Enfield. The cause may not appear quite adequate, when I tell you, that a course of ill-health and spirits brought us to the determination of giving up our house here, and we are boarding and lodging with a worthy old couple, long inhabitants of Enfield, where everything is done for us without our trouble, further than a reasonable weekly payment. We should have done so before, but it is not easy to flesh and blood to give up an ancient establishment, to discard old Penates, and from housekeepers to turn house-sharers. (N. B. We are not in the workhouse.) Diocletian, in his garden, found more repose than on the imperial seat of Rome; and the nob

of Charles the Fifth ached seldomer under a monk's cowl than under the diadem. With such shadows of assimilation we countenance our degradation. With such a load of dignified cares just removed from our shoulders, we can the more understand and pity the accession to yours, by the advancement to an assignee-ship. I will tell you honestly, B. B., that it has been long my deliberate judgment that all bankrupts, of what denomination, civil or religious, soever, ought to be hanged. The pity of mankind has for ages run in a wrong channel, and has been diverted from poor creditors — (how many have I known sufferers! Hazlitt has just been defrauded of 100*l.* by his bookseller-friend's breaking) — to scoundrel debtors. I know all the topics, — that distress may come upon an honest man without his fault; that the failure of one that he trusted was his calamity, &c. Then let *both* be hanged. O how careful this would make traders! These are my deliberate thoughts, after many years' experience in matters of trade. What a world of trouble it would save you, if Friend ***** had been immediately hanged, without benefit of clergy, which (being a Quaker I presume) he could not reasonably insist upon. Why, after slaving twelve months in your assign-business, you will be enabled to declare 7*d.* in the pound in all human probability. B. B., he should be *hanged.* Trade will never reflourish in this land till such a law is established. I write big, not to save ink, but eyes, mine having been troubled with reading through three folios of old Fuller in almost as few days, and I went to bed last night in agony, and am writing with a phial of eyewater before me, alternately dipping in phial and inkstand. This may inflame my zeal against bank-

rupts, but it was my speculation when I could see better. Half the world's misery (Eden else) is owing to want of money, and all that want is owing to bankrupts. I declare I would, if the state wanted practitioners, turn hangman myself, and should have great pleasure in hanging the first after my salutary law should be established. I have seen no annuals, and wish to see none. I like your fun upon them, and was quite pleased with Bowles's sonnet. Hood is, or was, at Brighton; but a note (prose or rhyme) to him, Robert Street, Adelphi, I am sure, would extract a copy of *his*, which also I have not seen. Wishing you and yours all health, I conclude while these frail glasses are to me — eyes, C. L."

The following letter, written in the beginning of 1830, describes his landlord and landlady, and expresses, with a fine solemnity, the feelings which still held him at Enfield.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Jan. 22nd, 1830.

"And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom; autumn hath foregone its moralities, — they are 'hey-pass repass,' as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year occurs back, — for they scarce

show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore, — 'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them; with the garden but to see it grow; with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how; quietists, — confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dullness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O! never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teasing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked gingerbread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street; and, for

the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled, — marry, they just begin to be conscious of the Redgauntlet:) — to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stockbrokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O! let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country anything better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns, — these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; anything high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light para-

graphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias enclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I do not flatter) is not a knob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a ninepin, — unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a 'Recluse' out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter-writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past; she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

"Our providers are an honest pair, Dame W—— and her husband; he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself parcel gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea-songs at threescore and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I

once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, 'I have married my daughter, however;' takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o' winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, (how comfortable to author-rid folks!) and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to balk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of innkeepers, hostlers, &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Derby. Understand, the creature galled to death and desperation by gadflies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus' daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a winter's eve; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence, to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity; that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly; that needs must when such a devil drove; that certain spiral configurations in the frame of T—— W—— unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames,

let accident and him share the glory. You would all like T—— W——. *[ ] How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favored in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo — indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses — still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple? sixty years ours and our father's friend? He was not more natural to us than this old W., the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if we ever do move, we have incumbrances the less to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rome; advices to that effect have reached Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live or die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Christmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Harz forest; his soul is be-Göethed. Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half year: the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, God forgive me, I have utterly

* Here was a rude sketch of a gentleman answering to the description.

forgotten; we single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? We see scarce anybody. Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularizing. C. L."

A letter which, addressed to Mr. Gilman, was intended both for him and his great guest Coleridge, gives another version of the same character. "One anecdote" of T—— W—— is repeated in it, with the substitution of Devizes for Dunstable. Which is the veritable place must remain a curious question for future descant, as the hero is dead, and his anecdote survives alone in these pages. It seems that Miss Lamb had accompanied his landlord on a little excursion.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Dear G.,—The excursionists reached home, and the good town of Enfield, a little after four, without slip or dislocation. Little has transpired concerning the events of the back-journey, save that on passing the house of 'Squire Mellish, situate a stone bow's cast from the hamlet, Father W——, with a good-natured wonderment, exclaimed, 'I cannot think what is gone of Mr. Mellish's rooks. I fancy they have taken flight somewhere, but I have missed them two or three years past.' All this while, according to his fellow-traveller's report, the rookery was darkening the air above with undiminished population, and deafening all ears but his with their cawings. But nature has been gently withdrawing such phenomena from the notice of two of T—— W——'s senses, from the time he began to miss the rooks. T. W—— has passed a

retired life in this hamlet, of thirty or forty years, living upon the minimum which is consistent with gentility, yet a star among the minor gentry, receiving the bows of the tradespeople, and courtesies of the alms'-women, daily. Children venerate him not less for his external show of gentry, than they wonder at him for a gentle rising endorsation of the person, not amounting to a hump, or if a hump, innocuous as the hump of the buffalo, and coronative of as mild qualities. 'Tis a throne on which patience seems to sit — the proud perch of a self-respecting humility, stooping with condescension. Thereupon the cares of life have sate, and rid him easily. For he has thrid the *angustiæ domûs* with dexterity. Life opened upon him with comparative brilliancy. He set out as a rider or traveller for a wholesale house, in which capacity he tells of many hairbreadth escapes that befell him; one especially, how he rode a mad horse into the town of Devizes; how horse and rider arrived in a foam, to the utter consternation of the expostulating hostlers, innkeepers, &c. It seems it was sultry weather, piping hot; the steed tormented into frenzy with gadflies, long past being roadworthy; but safety and the interest of the house he rode for were incompatible things; a fall in serge cloth was expected, and a mad entrance they made of it. Whether the exploit was purely voluntary, or partially; or whether a certain personal defiguration in the man part of this extraordinary centaur (non-assistive to partition of natures) might not enforce the conjunction, I stand not to inquire. I look not with 'skew eyes into the deeds of heroes. The hosier that was burnt with his shop in Field Lane, on Tuesday night, shall have past to heaven for me like a

Marian Martyr, provided always, that he consecrated the fortuitous incremation with a short ejaculation in the exit, as much as if he had taken his state degrees of martyrdom *in formâ* in the market vicinage. There is adoptive as well as acquisitive sacrifice. Be the animus what it might, the fact is indisputable, that this composition was seen flying all abroad, and mine host of Daintry may yet remember its passing through his town, if his scores are not more faithful than his memory. After this exploit (enough for one man), T—— W—— seems to have subsided into a less hazardous occupation; and in the twenty-fifth year of his age, we find him a haberdasher in Bow Lane: yet still retentive of his early riding (though leaving it to rawer stomachs), and Christmasly at night sithence to this last, and shall to his latest Christmas, hath he, doth he, and shall he, tell after supper the story of the insane steed and the desperate rider. Save for Bedlam or Luke's no eye could have guessed that melting day what house he rid for. But he reposes on his bridles, and after the ups and downs (metaphoric only) of a life behind the counter — hard riding sometimes, I fear, for poor T. W. — with the scrapings together of the shop, and *one anecdote*, he hath finally settled at Enfield; by hard economizing, gardening, building for himself, hath reared a mansion: married a daughter; qualified a son for a counting-house; gotten the respect of high and low; served for self or substitute the greater parish offices; hath a special voice at vestries; and, domiciliating us, hath reflected a portion of his housekeeping respectability upon your humble servants. We are greater, being his lodgers, than when we were substantial renters. His name is a passport to take off

the sneers of the native Enfielders against obnoxious foreigners. We are endenizened. Thus much of T. W—— have I thought fit to acquaint you, that you may see the exemplary reliance upon Providence with which I intrusted so dear a charge as my own sister to the guidance of the man that rode the mad horse into Devizes. To come from his heroic character, all the amiable qualities of domestic life concentre in this tamed Bellerophon. He is excellent over a glass of grog; just as pleasant without it; laughs when he hears a joke, and when (which is much oftener) he hears it not; sings glorious old sea-songs on festival nights; and but upon a slight acquaintance of two years, Coleridge, is as dear a deaf old man to us, as old Norris, rest his soul! was after fifty. To him and his scanty literature (what there is of it, *sound*) have we flown from the metropolis and its cursed annualists, reviewers, authors, and the whole muddy ink press of that stagnant pool.

"Now, Gilman again, you do not know the treasure of the Fullers. I calculate on having massy reading till Christmas. All I want here, is books of the true sort, not those things in boards that moderns mistake for books, what they club for at book clubs.

"I did not mean to cheat you with a blank side, but my eye smarts, for which I am taking medicine, and abstain, this day at least, from any aliments but milk-porridge, the innocent taste of which I am anxious to renew after a half-century's disacquaintance. If a blot fall here like a tear, it is not pathos, but an angry eye.

"Farewell, while my *specilla* are sound.

"Yours and yours, C. LAMB."

The next letter to Coleridge's excellent host, is a reply to a request from an importunate friend of his correspondent, that he would write something on behalf of the Spitalfields' weavers. Alien as such a task would have been to his habits of thought or composition, if Lamb had been acquainted with that singular race, living in their high, narrow, over-peopled houses, in the thickest part of London, yet almost apart from the great throng of its dwellers; indulging their straitened sympathies in the fostering of the more tender animals, as rabbits and pigeons, nurtured in their garrets or cellars; or cultivating some stunted plants with an intuitive love of nature, unfed by any knowledge of verdure beyond Hoxton; their painful industry, their uneducated morals, their eager snatches of pleasure from the only quickening of their intellect, by liquors, which make glad the heart of man; he would scarcely have refused the offered retainer for them.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"March 8th, 1830.

"My dear G., — Your friend B—— (for I knew him immediately by the smooth satinity of his style) must excuse me for advocating the cause of his friends in Spitalfields. The fact is, I am retained by the Norwich people, and have already appeared in their paper under the signatures of 'Lucius Sergius,' 'Bluff,' 'Broad-Cloth,' 'No-Trade-to-the-Woollen-Trade,' 'Anti-plush,' &c., in defence of druggets and long lamblets. And without this preëngagement, I feel I should naturally have chosen a side opposite to ——, for in the silken seemingness of his nature there is that

which offends me. My flesh tingles at such caterpillars. He shall not crawl me over. Let him and his workmen sing the old burthen,

'Heigh ho, ye weavers!'

for any aid I shall offer them in this emergency. I was over Saint Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm raving nights. The right-hand truckle in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood, for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon, who I suppose is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favorite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations; marry, to the same in Greek, you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet. Conceive the two Rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to

affect a humbler posture! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality; Latmos, I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings; her affection will be ever at the full. Well; keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places. C. L."

Here is a brief reply to the questioning of Lamb's true-hearted correspondent, Barton, who doubted of the personal verity of Lamb's "Joseph Paice," the most polite of merchants. This friend's personal acquaintance with Lamb had not been frequent enough to teach him, that if Lamb could innocently "lie like truth," he made up for this freedom, by sometimes making truth look like a lie. His account of Mr. Paice's politeness, could be attested to the letter by living witnesses.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dear B. B., — To reply to you by return of post, I must gobble up my dinner, and despatch this *in propriâ personâ* to the office, to be in time. So take it from me hastily, that you are perfectly welcome to furnish A. C. with the scrap, which I had almost forgotten writing. The more my character comes to be known, the less my veracity will come to be suspected. Time every day clears up some suspected narrative of Herodotus, Bruce, and others of us great travellers. Why, that Joseph Paice was as real a person as Joseph Hume, and a great deal pleasanter. A careful observer of life, Bernard, has no need to invent. Nature romances it for him. Dinner plates rattle, and I positively shall incur indigestion by carrying it half concocted to the

post-house. Let me congratulate you on the spring coming in, and do you in return condole with me on the winter going out. When the old one goes, seldom comes a better. I dread the prospect of summer, with his all-day-long days. No need of his assistance to make country places dull. With fire and candle-light, I can dream myself in Holborn. With lightsome skies shining into bedtime I cannot. This Meschek, and these tents of Kedar — I would dwell in the skirts of Jericho rather, and think every blast of the coming in mail a ram's horn. Give me old London at fire and plague times, rather than these tepid gales, healthy country air, and purposeless exercise.

"Leg of mutton absolutely on the table.

"Take our hasty loves and short farewell.

"C. L."

Lamb's kindness to Hone was not confined to his contributions to the "Every-day Book," and the "Table Book." Those pleasant and blameless works had failed to supply an adequate income for a numerous family, and Lamb was desirous of interesting his influential friends in a new project of Hone's, to establish himself in a coffee-house conducted in a superior style. With this view, he wrote to Southey, who, nobly forgetting Hone's old heresies in politics or parodies, had made a genial reference to his late work in his "Life of Bunyan."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"May 10th, 1830.

"Dear Southey, — My friend Hone, whom you would like *for a friend*, I found deeply impressed with

your generous notice of him in your beautiful 'Life of Bunyan,' which I am just now full of. He has written to you for leave to publish a certain good-natured letter. I write not this to enforce his request, for we are fully aware that the refusal of such publication would be quite consistent with all that is good in your character. Neither he nor I expect it from you, nor exact it; but if you would consent to it, you would have me obliged by it, as well as him. He is just now in a critical situation: kind friends have opened a coffee-house for him in the City, but their means have not extended to the purchase of coffee-pots, credit for Reviews, newspapers, and other paraphernalia. So I am sitting in the skeleton of a possible divan. What right I have to interfere, you best know. Look on me as a dog who went once temporarily insane, and bit you, and now begs for a crust. Will you set your wits to a dog?

"Our object is to open a subscription, which my friends of the —— are most willing to forward for him, but think that a leave from you to publish would aid it.

"But not an atom of respect or kindness will or shall it abate in either of us, if you decline it. Have this strongly in your mind.

"Those 'Every-day' and 'Table' Books will be a treasure a hundred years hence, but they have failed to make Hone's fortune.

"Here his wife and all his children are about me, gaping for coffee customers; but how should they come in, seeing no pot boiling!

"Enough of Hone. I saw Coleridge a day or two since. He has had some severe attack, not paralytic;

but, if I had not heard of it, I should not have found it out. He looks, and especially speaks, strong. How are all the Wordsworths, and all the Southeys, whom I am obliged to you if you have not brought up haters of the name of

"C. LAMB?

"P. S.—I have gone lately into the acrostic line. I find genius (such as I had) declines with me, but I get clever. Do you know anybody that wants charades, or such things, for Albums? I do 'em at so much a sheet. Perhaps an epigram (not a very happy-gram) I did for a school-boy yesterday may amuse. I pray Jove he may not get a flogging for any false quantity; but 'tis, with one exception, the only Latin verses I have made for forty years, and I did it 'to order.'

CUIQUE SUUM.

Adsciscit sibi divitias et opes alienas
Fur, rapiens, spolians, quod mihi, quod-que tibi,
Proprium erat, temnens hæc verba, meum-que, tuum-que;
Omne suum est: tandem Cui-que Suum tribuit.
Dat resti collum; restes, vah! carnifici dat;
Sese Diabolo, sic bene; Cuique Suum.

"I write from Hone's, therefore Mary cannot send her love to Mrs. Southey, but I do.

"Yours ever, C. L."

A rural conflagration at this time kindled the noblest range of Lamb's thoughts, which he expressed in the following letter. The light he flashes on the strange power exerted by the half-witted incendiary shows in it something of a fearful grandeur. It is addressed

TO MR. DYER.

"Dec. 20th, 1830.

"Dear Dyer, — I should have written before to thank you for your kind letter, written with your own hand. It glads us to see your writing. It will give you pleasure to hear that after so much illness we are in tolerable health and spirits once more. Poor Enfield, that has been so peaceable hitherto, has caught the inflammatory fever; the tokens are upon her; and a great fire was blazing last night in the barns and haystacks of a farmer, about half a mile from us. Where will these things end? There is no doubt of its being the work of some ill-disposed rustic, but how is he to be discovered? They go to work in the dark with strange chemical preparations, unknown to our forefathers. There is not even a dark lantern, to have a chance of detecting these Guy Fauxes. We are passed the iron age, and are got into the fiery age, undreamed of by Ovid. You are lucky in Clifford's Inn, where I think you have few ricks or stacks worth the burning. Pray, keep as little corn by you as you can for fear of the worst. It was never good times in England since the poor began to speculate upon their condition. Formerly they jogged on with as little reflection as horses. The whistling ploughman went cheek by jowl with his brother that neighed. Now the biped carries a box of phosphorus in his leather breeches, and in the dead of night the half-illuminated beast steals his magic potion into a cleft in a barn, and half the country is grinning with new fires. Farmer Graystock said something to the touchy rustic, that he did not relish, and he writes his distaste in flames.

What a power to intoxicate his crude brains, just muddlingly awake to perceive that something is wrong in the social system, — what a hellish faculty above gunpowder! Now the rich and poor are fairly pitted. We shall see who can hang or burn fastest. It is not always revenge that stimulates these kindlings. There is a love of exerting mischief! Think of a disrespected clod, that was trod into earth; that was nothing; on a sudden by damned arts refined into an exterminating angel, devouring the fruits of the earth, and their growers, in a mass of fire; what a new existence! What a temptation above Lucifer's! Would clod be anything but a clod, if he could resist it? Why, here was a spectacle last night for a whole country, a bonfire visible to London, alarming her guilty towers, and shaking the Monument with an ague fit, all done by a little phial of phosphor in a clown's fob. How he must grin, and shake his empty noddle in clouds! The Vulcanian epicure! Alas! can we ring the bells backward? Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilize, and then burn the world? There is a march of science; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat? Who shall persuade the boor that phosphor will not ignite? Seven goodly stacks of hay, with corn-barns proportionable, lie smoking ashes and chaff, which man and beast would sputter out and reject like those apples of asphaltes and bitumen. The food for the inhabitants of earth will quickly disappear. Hot rolls may say, Fuimus panes, fuit quartern-loaf, et ingens gloria apple-pasty-orum.' That the good old munching system may last thy time and mine, good un-incendiary George! is the devout prayer of thine.

"To the last crust, C. LAMB."

In 1830, Lamb took a journey to Bury St. Edmund's, to fetch Miss Isola to her adopted home, from a visit which had been broken by her illness. It was on his return that Lamb's repartee to the query of the statistical gentleman as to the prospects of the turnip crop, which has been repeatedly published, was made. The following is his own version of it, contained in a letter addressed to Miss Isola's hostess, on their arrival.

"A rather talkative gentleman, but very civil, engaged me in a discourse for full twenty miles, on the probable advantages of steam carriages, which, being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he put an unfortunate question to me, as to the 'probability of its turning out a good turnip season,' and when I, who am still less of an agriculturist than a steam philosopher, not knowing a turnip from a potato ground, innocently made answer, that 'I believed it depended very much upon boiled legs of mutton,' my unlucky reply set Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the only moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with a well-informed passenger, which is an accident so desirable in a stage-coach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way."

To the same lady, having sent him an acrostic on his sister's name, he replied with a letter which contained one on hers, and the following notice of his own talent in the acrostic line.

"Dear Madam, — I do assure you that your verses gratified me very much, and my sister is quite *proud* of them. For the first time in my life I congratulated myself upon the shortness and meanness of my name. Had it been Schwartzenberg or Esterhazy, it would have put you to some puzzle. I am afraid I shall sicken you of acrostics, but this last was written *to order*. I beg you to have inserted in your county paper, something like this advertisement. 'To the nobility, gentry, and others, about Bury. — C. Lamb respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he is leaving off business in the acrostic line, as he is going into an entirely new line. Rebuses and charades done as usual, and upon the old terms. Also, epitaphs to suit the memory of any person deceased.'

"I thought I had adroitly escaped the rather unpliable name of 'Williams,' curtailing your poor daughters to their proper surnames, but it seems you would not let me off so easily. If these trifles amuse you, I am paid. Though really 'tis an operation too much like — 'A, apple-pie; B, bit it.' To make amends, I request leave to lend you the 'Excursion,' and to recommend, in particular, the 'Churchyard Stories;' in the seventh book, I think. They will strengthen the tone of your mind after its weak diet on acrostics."

* * * * *

In 1830, a small volume of poems, the gleanings of some years, during which Lamb had devoted himself to prose, under his name of "Elia," was published by Mr. Moxon, under the title of "Album Verses," and which Lamb, in token of his strong regard, dedicated to the Publisher. An unfavorable review of them

in the "Literary Gazette" produced some verses from Southey, which were inserted in the "Times," and of which the following, as evincing his unchanged friendship, may not unfitly be inserted here. The residue, being more severe on Lamb's critics than Lamb himself would have wished, may now be spared.

Charles Lamb, to those who know thee justly dear
For rarest genius, and for sterling worth,
Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,
And wit that never gave an ill thought birth,
Nor ever in its sport infix'd a sting;
To us who have admired and loved thee long,
It is a proud as well as pleasant thing
To hear thy good report, now borne along
Upon the honest breath of public praise:
We know that with the elder sons of song,
In honoring whom thou hast delighted still,
Thy name shall keep its course to after days.

This year closed upon the grave of Hazlitt. Lamb visited him frequently during his last illness, and attended his funeral. They had taken great delight in each other's conversation for many years; and though the indifference of Lamb to the objects of Hazlitt's passionate love or hatred, as a politician, at one time produced a coolness, the warmth of the defence of Hazlitt in "Elia's Letter to Southey" renewed the old regard of the philosopher, and set all to rights. Hazlitt, in his turn, as an Edinburgh Reviewer, had opportunities which he delighted to use, of alluding to Lamb's Specimens and Essays, and making him amends for the severity of ancient criticism, which the editor, who could well afford the genial inconsistency, was too generous to exclude. The conduct, indeed, of that distinguished person to Hazlitt, especially in his last illness, won Lamb's admiration, and wholly effaced the recollection

of the time when, thirty years before, his play had been denied critical mercy under his rule. Hazlitt's death did not so much shock Lamb at the time, as it weighed down his spirits afterwards, when he felt the want of those essays which he had used periodically to look for with eagerness in the magazines and reviews which they alone made tolerable to him; and when he realized the dismal certainty that he should never again enjoy that rich discourse of old poets and painters with which so many a long winter's night had been gladdened, or taste life with an additional relish in the keen sense of enjoyment which endeared it to his companion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1830 to 1834.]

LAMB'S LAST LETTERS AND DEATH.

After the year 1830, Lamb's verses and essays were chiefly given to his friends; the former consisting of album contributions, the latter of little essences of observation and criticism. Mr. Moxon, having established a new magazine, called the "Englishman's Magazine," induced him to write a series of papers, some of which were not inferior to his happiest essays. At this time, his old and excellent friend, Dyer, was much annoyed by some of his witticisms, — which, in truth, were only Lamb's modes of expressing his deep-seated regard; and at the quotation of a couplet in one of his

early poems, which he had suppressed as liable to be misconstrued by Mr. Rogers. Mr. Barker had unfortunately met with the unexpurgated edition which contained this dubious couplet, and in his "Memorials of Dr. Parr" quoted the passage; which, to Mr. Dyer's delicate feelings,* conveyed the apprehension that Mr. Rogers would treat the suppression as colorable, and refer the revival of the lines to his sanction. The following letter was written to dispel those fears from his mind.

TO MR. DYER.

"Feb. 22nd, 1831.

"Dear Dyer, — Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Rogers' friends, are perfectly assured, that you never intended any harm by an innocent couplet, and that in the revivification of it by blundering Barker you had no hand whatever. To imagine that, at this time of day, Rogers broods over a fantastic expression of more than thirty years'

* Mr. Dyer also complained to Mr. Lamb of some suggestions in Elia, which annoyed him, not so much for his own sake as for the sake of others, who, in the delicacy of his apprehensiveness, he thought might feel aggrieved by imputations which were certainly not intended, and which they did not deserve. One passage in Elia, hinting that he had been hardly dealt with by schoolmasters, under whom he had been a teacher in his younger days, hurt him; as, in fact, he was treated by them with the most considerate generosity and kindness. Another passage which he regarded as implying that he had been underpaid by booksellers, also vexed him; as his labors have always been highly esteemed, and have, according to the rate of remuneration of learned men, been well compensated by Mr. Valpy and others. The truth is that Lamb wrote from a vague recollection, without intending any personal reference at all to Mr. Dyer himself, and only seeking to illustrate the pure, simple, and elevated character of a man of letters "unspotted from the world." Probably no one has ever applied these suggestions to the parties for whose reputation Mr. Dyer has been so honorably anxious but himself; but it is due to his feelings to state that they are founded in error.

standing, would be to suppose him indulging his 'pleasures of memory' with a vengeance. You never penned a line which for its own sake you need, dying, wish to blot. You mistake your heart if you think you *can* write a lampoon. Your whips are rods of roses. Your spleen has ever had for its objects vices, not the vicious; abstract offences, not the concrete sinner. But you are sensitive, and wince as much at the consciousness of having committed a compliment, as another man would at the perpetration of an affront. But do not lug me into the same soreness of conscience with yourself. I maintain, and will to the last hour, that I never writ of you but *con amore*. That if any allusion was made to your near-sightedness, it was not for the purpose of mocking an infirmity, but of connecting it with scholar-like habits; for, is it not erudite and scholarly to be somewhat near of sight, before age naturally brings on the malady? You could not then plead the *obrepens senectus*. Did I not moreover make it an apology for a certain *absence*, which some of your friends may have experienced, when you have not on a sudden made recognition of them in a casual street-meeting? and did I not strengthen your excuse for this slowness of recognition, by further accounting morally for the present engagement of your mind in worthy objects? Did I not, in your person, make the handsomest apology for absent-of-mind people that was ever made? If these things be not so, I never knew what I wrote, or meant by my writing, and have been penning libels all my life without being aware of it. Does it follow that I should have exprest myself exactly in the same way of those dear old eyes of yours *now*, now that Father Time has conspired with a hard taskmaster to put a last extin-

guisher upon them. I should as soon have insulted the Answerer of Salmasius, when he awoke up from his ended task, and saw no more with mortal vision. But you are many films removed yet from Milton's calamity. You write perfectly intelligibly. Marry, the letters are not all of the same size or tallness; but that only shows your proficiency in the *hands*, text, german-hand, court-hand, sometimes law-hand, and affords variety. You pen better than you did a twelvemonth ago; and if you continue to improve, you bid fair to win the golden pen which is the prize at your young gentlemen's academy. But you must be aware of Valpy, and his printing-house, that hazy cave of Trophonius, out of which it was a mercy that you escaped with a glimmer. Beware of MSS. and Variæ Lectiones. Settle the text for once in your mind, and stick to it. You have some years' good sight in you yet, if you do not tamper with it. It is not for you (for *us* I should say), to go poring into Greek contractions, and star-gazing upon slim Hebrew points. We have yet the sight

> Of sun, and moon, and star, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

You have vision enough to discern Mrs. Dyer from the other comely gentlewoman who lives up at staircase No. 5; or, if you should make a blunder in the twilight, Mrs. Dyer has too much good sense to be jealous for a mere effect of imperfect optics. But don't try to write the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments in the compass of a half-penny; nor run after a midge, or a mote, to catch it; and leave off hunting for needles in bushels of hay, for all these things strain the eyes. The snow is six feet deep in some parts here. I must

put on jack-boots to get at the post-office with this. It is not good for weak eyes to pore upon snow too much. It lies in drifts. I wonder what its drift is; only that it makes good pancakes, remind Mrs. Dyer. It turns a pretty green world into a white one. It glares too much for an innocent color methinks. I wonder why you think I dislike gilt edges. They set off a letter marvellously. Yours, for instance, looks for all the world like a tablet of curious *hieroglyphics* in a gold frame. But don't go and lay this to your eyes. You always wrote hieroglyphically, yet not to come up to the mystical notations and conjuring characters of Dr. Parr. You never wrote what I call a schoolmaster's hand, like C——; nor a woman's hand, like S——; nor a missal hand, like Porson; nor an all-of-the-wrong-side sloping hand, like Miss H——; nor a dogmatic, Mede-and-Persian, peremptory hand, like R——; but you ever wrote what I call a Grecian's hand; what the Grecians write (or used) at Christ's Hospital; such as Whalley would have admired, and Boyer have applauded, but Smith or Atwood (writing-masters) would have horsed you for. Your boy-of-genius hand and your mercantile hand are various. By your flourishes, I should think you never learned to make eagles or corkscrews, or flourish the governors' names in the writing-school; and by the tenor and cut of your letters, I suspect you were never in it at all. By the length of this scrawl you will think I have a design upon your optics; but I have writ as large as I could, out of respect to them; too large, indeed, for beauty. Mine is a sort of deputy Grecian's hand; a little better, and more of a worldly hand, than a Grecian's, but still remote from the mercantile. I don't know how it is,

but I keep my rank in fancy still since school-days. I can never forget I was a deputy Grecian! And writing to you, or to Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to Grecians still. I keep my soaring way above the Great Erasmians, yet far beneath the other. Alas! what am I now? what is a Leadenhall clerk, or Indian pensioner, to a deputy Grecian? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! Just room for our loves to Mrs. D., &c.

"C. LAMB."

The Death of Munden reviving his recollections of "the veteran comedian," called forth the following letter of the 11th February, 1832, to the editor of the "Athenæum," whom Lamb had, for a long time, numbered among his friends.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ATHENÆUM."

"Dear Sir, — Your communication to me of the death of Munden made me weep. Now, Sir, I am not of the melting mood. But, in these serious times, the loss of half the world's fun is no trivial deprivation. It was my loss (or *gain* shall I call it) in the early time of my play-going, to have missed all Munden's acting. There was only he and Lewis at Covent Garden, while Drury Lane was exuberant with Parsons, Dodd, &c., such a comic company as, I suppose, the stage never showed. Thence, in the evening of my life I had Munden all to myself, more mellowed, richer, perhaps, than ever. I cannot say what his change of faces produced in me. It was not acting. He was not one of my 'old actors.' It might be bet-

ter. His power was extravagant. I saw him one evening in three drunken characters. Three farces were played. One part was *Dosey* — I forget the rest; but they were so discriminated that a stranger might have seen them all, and not have dreamed that he was seeing the same actor. I am jealous for the actors who pleased my youth. He was not a Parsons or a Dodd, but he was more wonderful. He seemed as if he could *do* anything. He was not an actor, but something *better*, if you please. Shall I instance *Old Foresight*, in 'Love for Love,' in which Parsons was at once the old man, the astrologer, &c. Munden dropped the old man, the doater — which makes the character — but he substituted for it a moon-struck character, a perfect abstraction from this earth, that looked as if he had newly come down from the planets. Now, *that* is not what I call *acting*. It might be better. He was imaginative; he could impress upon an audience an *idea* — the low one, perhaps, of a leg of mutton and turnips; but such was the grandeur and singleness of his expressions, that that single expression would convey to all his auditory a notion of all the pleasures they had all received from all the legs of mutton *and turnips* they had ever eaten in their lives. Now, this is not *acting*, nor do I set down Munden amongst my old actors. He was only a wonderful man, exerting his vivid impressions through the agency of the stage. In one only thing did I see him *act* — that is, support a character; it was in a wretched farce, called 'Johnny Gilpin,' for Dowton's benefit, in which he did a cockney. The thing ran but one night; but when I say that Liston's *Lubin Log* was nothing to it, I say little: it was transcendent. And here let me say of actors,

envious actors, that of *Munden*, Liston was used to speak, almost with the enthusiasm due to the dead, in terms of such allowed superiority to every actor on the stage, and this at a time when Munden was gone by in the world's estimation, that it convinced me that *artists* (in which term I include poets, painters, &c.) are not so envious as the world think. I have little time, and therefore enclose a criticism on Munden's *Old Dosey* and his general acting,* by a friend.

"C. LAMB."

"Mr. Munden appears to us to be the most *classical* of actors. He is that in high farce, which Kemble was in high tragedy. The lines of these great artists are, it must be admitted, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements are in both, — the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of aim, the same concentration of power, the same iron-casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement, and attitude. The hero of farce is as little affected with impulses from without, as the retired Prince of Tragedians. There is something solid, sterling, almost adamantine, in the building up of his most grotesque characters. When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last forever. It is like what we can imagine a mask of the old Grecian Comedy to have been, only that it lives, and breathes, and changes. His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of

* A little article inserted in "The Champion" before Lamb wrote his essay on the Acting of Munden. Lamb's repetition may cast on it sufficient interest to excuse its repetition here.

farce. He seems as though he belonged to the earliest and the stateliest age of Comedy, when instead of superficial foibles and the airy varieties of fashion, she had the grand asperities of man to work on, when her grotesque images had something romantic about them, and when humor and parody were themselves heroic. His expressions of feeling and bursts of enthusiasm are among the most genuine which we have ever felt. They seem to come up from a depth of emotion in the heart, and burst through the sturdy casing of manner with a strength which seems increased tenfold by its real and hearty obstacle. The workings of his spirit seem to expand his frame, till we can scarcely believe that by measure it is small: for the space which he fills in the imagination is so real, that we almost mistake it for that of corporeal dimensions. His *Old Dosey*, in the excellent farce of 'Past Ten o'Clock,' is his grandest effort of this kind, and we know of nothing finer. He seems to have a 'heart of oak' indeed. His description of a sea-fight is the most noble and triumphant piece of enthusiasm which we remember. It is as if the spirits of a whole crew of nameless heroes 'were swelling in his bosom.' We never felt so ardent and proud a sympathy with the valor of England as when we heard it. May health long be his, thus to do our hearts good — for we never saw any actor whose merits have the least resemblance to his even in species; and when his genius is withdrawn from the stage, we shall not have left even a term by which we can fitly describe it."

The following letter is

TO MR. CARY.

"Assidens est mihi bona soror, Euripiden evolvens, donum vestrum, carissime Cary, pro quo gratias agimus, lecturi atque iterum lecturi idem. Pergratus est liber ambobus, nempe 'Sacerdotis Commiserationis,' sacrum opus a te ipso Humanissimæ Religionis Sacerdote dono datum. Lachrymantes gavisuri sumus; est ubi dolor fiat voluptas; nec semper dulce mihi est ridere; aliquando commutandum est he! he! he! cum heu! heu! heu!

"A Musis Tragicis me non penitus abhorruisse testis sit Carmen Calamitosum, nescio quo autore linguâ prius vernaculâ scriptum, et nuperrimè a me ipso Latine versum, scilicet, 'Tom Tom of Islington.' Tenuistine?

'Thomas Thomas de Islington,
Uxorem duxit Die quâdam Solis,
Abduxit domum sequenti die,
Emit baculum subsequenti,
Vapulat illa posterâ,
Ægrotat succedenti, Mortua fit crastinâ.'

Et miro gaudio afficitur Thomas luce posterâ quod subsequenti (nempe, Dominicâ) uxor sit efferenda.

'En Iliades Domesticas!
En circulum calamitatum!
Planè hebdomadalem tragœdiam.'

I nunc et confer Euripiden vestrum his luctibus, hâc morte uxoriâ; confer Alcesten! Hecuben! quas non antiquas Heroinas Dolorosas.

"Suffundor genas lachrymis tantas strages revolvens.

Quid restat nisi quod Tecum Tuam Caram salutamus ambosque valere jubeamus, nosmet ipsi bene valentes.

"ELIA."

"Datum ab agro Enfeldiensi, Maii die sextâ, 1831."

Coleridge, now in declining health, seems to have feared, from a long intermission of Lamb's visits to Highgate, that there was some estrangement between them, and to have written to Lamb under that fear. The following note shows how much he was mistaken.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 14th, 1832.

"My dear Coleridge, — Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you. But I have been woefully neglectful of you, so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence; and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gilmans when I come.

"Yours *semper idem*, C. L."

"If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and maybe a wrong prophet of your bodings! — here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer showers.

"My direction is simply Enfield."

Lamb's regard for Mr. Cary had now ripened into a fast friendship; and by agreement he dined every third Wednesday in the month at the Museum. In general, these were occasions on which Lamb observed the strictest rules of temperance; but once accident of stomach or of sentiment caused a woful deviation, which Lamb deplored in the following letter.

TO MR. CARY.

"I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality, which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house, say a merchant's, or a manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's, or greengrocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of Parliament's, a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity. But to be seen deliberately to go out of the house of a clergyman drunk! a clergyman of the Church of England too! not that alone, but of an expounder of that dark Italian Hierophant, an exposition little short of *his* who dared unfold the Apocalypse: divine riddles both; and, without supernal grace vouchsafed, Arks not to be fingered without present blasting to the touchers. And then from what house! Not a common glebe, or vicarage (which yet had been shameful), but from a kingly repository of sciences, human and divine, with the primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better! With feverish eyes on the succeeding dawn I opened upon the faint light, enough to distinguish, in a

strange chamber, not immediately to be recognized, garters, hose, waistcoat, neckerchief, arranged in dreadful order and proportion, which I knew was not mine own. 'Tis the common symptom, on awaking, I judge my last night's condition from. A tolerable scattering on the floor I hail as being too probably my own, and if the candlestick be not removed, I assoil myself. But this finical arrangement, this finding everything in the morning in exact diametrical rectitude, torments me. By whom was I divested? Burning blushes! not by the fair hands of nymphs, the Buffam Graces? Remote whispers suggested that I *coached* it home in triumph. Far be that from working pride in me, for I was unconscious of the locomotion. That a young Mentor accompanied a reprobate old Telemachus; that, the Trojan like, he bore his charge upon his shoulders, while the wretched incubus, in glimmering sense, hiccuped drunken snatches of flying on the bats' wings after sunset. An aged servitor was also hinted at, to make disgrace more complete, one, to whom my ignominy may offer further occasions of revolt (to which he was before too fondly inclining) from the true faith; for, at a sight of my helplessness, what more was needed to drive him to the advocacy of independency? Occasion led me through Great Russell Street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker. My feeble hands in vain essayed to lift it. I dreaded that Argus Portitor, who doubtless lanterned me out on that prodigious night. I called the Elginian marbles. They were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding, say, without fear of thrusting back, in a light but a peremptory air, 'I am going to Mr. Cary's.' I passed by the walls of Balclu

tha. I had imaged to myself a zodiac of third Wednesdays irradiating by glimpses the Edmonton dulness. I dreamed of Highmore! I am de-vited to come on Wednesdays. Villanous old age, that, with second childhood, brings linked hand in hand her inseparable twin, new inexperience, which knows not effects of liquor. Where I was to have sate for a sober, middle-aged-and-a-half-gentleman, literary too, the neat fingered artist can educe no notions but of a dissoluted Silenus, lecturing natural philosophy to a jeering Chromius, or a Mnasilus. Pudet. From the context gather the lost name of ——."

In 1833 the choicest prose essays, which Lamb had written since the publication of Elia, were collected and published — as with a melancholy foreboding — under the title of "The Last Essays of Elia;" by Mr. Moxon. The work contains ample proof that the powers of the author had ripened rather than declined; for the paper called "Blakesmoor in H—shire," which embodies his recollection of the old mansion in which his grandmother lived as housekeeper; those on Elliston, "Captain Jackson," and "The Old Margate Hoy," are among the most original, the least constrained, and the most richly colored of his works. It was favorably noticed by almost all the principal critics — by many enthusiastically and sincerely praised — and an admirable notice in "The Quarterly" was published just after the foreboding of the title was fulfilled. His indisposition to write, however, increased; but in creating so much, excellent in its kind, so complete in itself, and so little tinged with alloy, he had, in truth, done enough, and had earned in literature, as in

the drudgery of the desk, a right to repose. Yet, still ready to obey the call of friendship, he wrote both prologue and epilogue to Knowles's play of "The Wife;" the composition of which must have been mere labor, as they are only decently suited to the occasion, and have no mark or likelihood to repay the vanity of the poet.

Miss Isola's marriage, which left Lamb and his sister once more alone, induced them to draw a little nearer to their friends; and they fixed their abode in Church Street, Edmonton, within reach of the Enfield walks, which custom had endeared to them. There with his sister he continued, regularly visiting London and dining with Mr. Cary on every third Wednesday. The following notelet is in answer to a letter enclosing a list of candidates for a widows' fund society, for which he was entitled to vote.

TO MR. CARY.

"Dear Sir, — The unbounded range of munificence presented to my choice, staggers me. What can twenty votes do for one hundred and two widows? I cast my eyes hopeless among the viduage. N. B. — Southey* might be ashamed of himself to let his aged mother stand at the top of the list, with his 100*l.* a year and butt of sack. Sometimes I sigh over No. 12, Mrs. Carve-ill, some poor relation of mine, no doubt. No. 15 has my wishes, but then she is a Welsh one. I have Ruth upon No. 21. I'd tug hard for No. 24. No. 25 is an anomaly, there can be no Mrs. Hogg. No. 34 ensnares me. No. 73 should not have met so foolish a

* A Mrs. Southey headed the enclosed list.

person. No. 92 may bob it as she likes, but she catches no cherry of me. So I have even fixed at hap-hazard, as you'll see.

"Yours, every third Wednesday, C. L."

Lamb was entirely destitute of what is commonly called "a taste for music." A few old tunes ran in his head; now and then the expression of a sentiment, though never of song, touched him with rare and exquisite delight; and Braham in his youth, Miss Rennell, who died too soon, and who used to sing the charming air, "In infancy our hopes and fears," and Miss Burrell, won his ear and his heart. But usually music only confused him, and an opera — to which he once or twice tried to accompany Miss Isola — was to him a maze of sound in which he almost lost his wits. But he did not, therefore, take less pleasure in the success of Miss Clara Novello, — whose family he had known for many years, — and to whom he addressed the following lines, which were inserted in the "Athenæum," of July 26, in this his last year.

TO CLARA N.

The Gods have made me most unmusical,
With feelings that respond not to the call
Of stringed harp, or voice — obtuse and mute
To hautboy, sackbut, dulcimer, and flute;
King David's lyre, that made the madness flee
From Saul, had been but a jew's-harp to me:
Theorbos, violins, French horns, guitars,
Leave in my wounded ears inflicted scars;
I hate those trills, and shakes, and sounds that float
Upon the captive air; I know no note,
Nor ever shall, whatever folks may say,
Of the strange mysteries of *Sol* and *Fa*;
I sit at oratorios like a fish,
Incapable of sound, and only wish

The thing was over. Yet do I admire,
O tuneful daughter of a tuneful sire,
Thy painful labors in a science, which
To your deserts I pray may make you rich
As much as you are loved, and add a grace
To the most musical Novello race.
Women lead men by the nose, some cynics say;
You draw them by the ear — a delicater way.

C. LAMB.

He had now to sustain the severest of his losses. After a long and painful illness — borne with an heroic patience which concealed the intensity of his sufferings from the by-standers, Coleridge died. As in the instance of Hazlitt, Lamb did not feel the immediate blow so acutely as he himself expected — but the calamity sank deep into his mind, and was, I believe, seldom far from his thoughts. It had been arranged that the attendance at the funeral should be confined to the family of the departed poet and philosopher, and Lamb, therefore, was spared the misery of going through the dismal ceremony of mourning. For the first week he forebore to write; but at its close he addressed the following short letter to one of the family of him whom he once so justly denominated Coleridge's "more than friend." Like most of Lamb's letters, it is undated, but the postmark is Aug. 5, 1834.

TO THE REV. JAMES GILMAN.

"My dear Sir, — The sad week being over, I must write to you to say, that I was glad of being spared from attending; I have no words to express my feeling with you all. I can only say that when you think a short visit from me would be acceptable, when your father and mother shall be able to see me *with com-*

fort, I will come to the bereaved house. Express to them my tenderest regards and hopes that they will continue our friends still. We both love and respect them as much as a human being can, and finally thank them with our hearts for what they have been to the poor departed.

"God bless you all. C. LAMB."

"Mr. Walden's,
"Church Street, Edmonton."

Shortly after, assured that his presence would be welcome, Lamb went to Highgate. There he asked leave to see the nurse who had attended upon Coleridge; and being struck and affected by the feeling she manifested towards his friend, insisted on her receiving five guineas from him, — a gratuity which seemed almost incomprehensible to the poor woman, but which Lamb could not help giving as an immediate expression of his own gratitude. From her he learned the effort by which Coleridge had suppressed the expression of his sufferings, and the discovery affected him even more than the news of his death. He would startle his friends sometimes by suddenly exclaiming, "Coleridge is dead!" and then pass on to common themes, having obtained the momentary relief of oppressed spirits. He still continued, however, his monthly visits to Mr. Cary; and was ready to write an acrostic, or a complimentary epigram, at the suggestion of any friend. The following is the last of his effusions in verse.

TO MARGARET W——.

Margaret, in happy hour
Christen'd from that humble flower

Which we a daisy * call!
May thy pretty namesake be
In all things a type of thee,
And image thee in all.

Like *it* you show a modest face,
An unpretending native grace;—
The tulip, and the pink,
The china and the damask rose,
And every flaunting flower that blows,
In the comparing shrink.

Of lowly fields you think no scorn;
Yet gayest gardens would adorn,
And grace wherever set.
Home-seated in your lonely bower,
Or wedded — a transplanted flower —
I bless you, Margaret!

CHARLES LAMB.

Edmonton, Oct. 8th, 1834.

A present of game, from an unknown admirer, produced the following acknowledgment, in the "Athenæum" of 30th November, destined to be, in sad verity, the last essay of Elia.

THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, &c.

"We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy;* to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum;' to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is, methinks *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it." — *Last Essays of Elia.*

* Marguerite, in French, signifies a daisy

"Elia presents his acknowledgments to his 'Correspondent unknown,' for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be a reader of the "Athenæum," else he had meditated a notice in the "Times." Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for: pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown, with gravy and melted butter! — old Mr. Chambers, the sensible clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia, used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was overdoing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel, who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of 'Jug, Jug, Jug,' Elia pronounces that a hare, to be truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so 'crips,' as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste, that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents — good, but mistaken men — in consequence of their erroneous supposition, that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*) but for some subtle analogy between the delicate fla-

vor of the latter, and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madnesses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase, of modern usage. 'Tis true the hare is the most circumspect of animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise, which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble will I call her, in spite of her detractors, who from occasional demonstrations of the principle of self-preservation (common to all animals), infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen, with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three counties: and because the well-flavored beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord — comes the grave naturalist, Linnæus perchance, or Buffon, and gravely sets down the hare as a — timid animal. Why, Achilles, or Bully Dawson, would have declined the preposterous combat.

"In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare! How tender its processes after swallowing! What chyle it promotes! How ethereal! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare, than a cursory thanks to the country good 'Unknown.' The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than

"ELIA."

A short time only before Lamb's fatal illness, he yielded to my urgent importunity, and met a small

party of his friends at dinner, at my house, where we had provided for him some of the few articles of food which now seemed to hit his fancy, and among them the hare, which had supplanted pig in his just esteem, with the hope of exciting his very delicate appetite. We were not disappointed; he ate with a relish not usual with him of late years, and passed the evening in his happiest mood. Among the four or five who met him on this occasion, the last on which I saw him in health, were his old friends Mr. Barron Field, Mr. Procter, and Mr. Forster, the author of the "Lives of Eminent English Statesmen," a friend of comparatively recent date, but one with whom Lamb found himself as much at home as if he had known him for years. Mr. Field, in a short but excellent memoir of Lamb, in the "Annual Biography and Obituary" of 1836, has brought this evening vividly to recollection: and I have a melancholy satisfaction in quoting a passage from it as he has recorded it. After justly eulogizing Lamb's sense of "The Virtue of Suppression in Writing," Mr. Field proceeds: —

"We remember at the very last supper we ate with him, he quoted a passage from Prior's 'Henry and Emma,' illustrative of this discipline; and yet he said that he loved Prior as much as any man, but that his 'Henry and Emma' was a vapid paraphrase of the old poem of 'The Nutbrowne Mayde.' For example, at the *dénouement* of the ballad, Prior makes Henry rant out to his devoted Emma —

'In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
Illustrious Earl! him terrible in war.
Let Loire confess, for she has felt his sword,
And trembling fled before the British lord'

And so on for a dozen couplets, heroic, as they are called. And then Mr. Lamb made us mark the modest simplicity with which the noble youth discloses himself to his mistress in the old poem: —

'Now, understand,
To Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage,
(in a parenthesis, as it were,)
I will you bring,
And with a ring,
By way of marriage,
I will you take,
And lady make,
As shortly as I can.
So have you won,
An Earle's son,
And not a banish'd man.'

How he loved these old rhymes, and with what justice!"

In December Mr. Lamb received a letter from a gentleman, a stranger to him, — Mr. Childs, of Bungay, whose copy of "Elia" had been sent on an oriental voyage, and who, in order to replace it, applied to Mr. Lamb. The following is his reply: —

TO MR. CHILDS.

"Monday. Church Street, EDMONTON, (not Enfield, as you erroneously direct yours).

"Dear Sir, — The volume which you seem to want is not to be had for love or money. I with difficulty procured a copy for myself. Yours is gone to enlighten the tawny Hindoos. What a supreme felicity to the author (only he is no traveller) on the Ganges or Hydaspes (Indian streams) to meet a smutty Gentoo ready to burst with laughing at the tale of Bo-Bo! for

doubtless it hath been translated into all the dialects of the East. I grieve the less, that Europe should want it. I cannot gather from your letter, whether you are aware that a second series of the Essays is published by Moxon, in Dover Street, Piccadilly, called 'The Last Essays of Elia,' and, I am told, is not inferior to the former. Shall I order a copy for you, and will you accept it? Shall I *lend* you, at the same time, my sole copy of the former volume (Oh! return it) for a month or two? In return, you shall favor me with the loan of one of those Norfolk-bred grunters that you laud so highly; I promise not to keep it above a day. What a funny name Bungay is! I never dreamt of a correspondent thence. I used to think of it as some Utopian town, or borough in Gotham land. I now believe in its existence, as part of merry England.

[Here are some lines scratched out.]

The part I have scratched out is the best of the letter. Let me have your commands.

"CH. LAMB, *alias* ELIA."

A few days after this letter was written, an accident befell Mr. Lamb, which seemed trifling at first, but which terminated in a fatal issue. In taking his daily morning walk on the London road as far as the inn where John Gilpin's ride is pictured, he stumbled against a stone, fell, and slightly injured his face. The wounds seemed healing, when erysipelas in the head came on, and he sunk beneath the disease, happily without pain. On Friday evening Mr. Ryle, of the India House, who had been appointed coexecutor with me of his will some years before, called on me, and informed me that he was in danger. I went over to

Edmonton on the following morning, and found him very weak, and nearly insensible to things passing around him. Now and then a few words were audible, from which it seemed that his mind, in its feebleness, was intent on kind and hospitable thoughts. His last correspondent, Mr. Childs, had sent a present of a turkey, instead of the suggested pig; and the broken sentences which could be heard, were of some meeting of friends to partake of it. I do not think he knew me; and having vainly tried to engage his attention, I quitted him, not believing his death so near at hand. In less than an hour afterwards, his voice gradually grew fainter, as he still murmured the names of Moxon, Procter, and some other old friends, and he sank into death as placidly as into sleep. On the following Saturday his remains were laid in a deep grave in Edmonton churchyard, made in a spot which, about a fortnight before, he had pointed out to his sister, on an afternoon wintry walk, as the place where he wished to be buried.

So died, in the sixtieth year of his age, one of the most remarkable and amiable men who have ever lived. Few of his numerous friends were aware of his illness before they heard of his death; and until that illness seized him, he had appeared so little changed by time, so likely to continue for several years, and he was so intimately associated with every-day engagements and feelings, that the news was as strange as it was mournful. When the first sad surprise was over, several of his friends strove to do justice to their own recollections of him; and articles upon his character and writings, all written out of the heart, appeared from Mr. Procter in the "Athenæum," from Mr. Forster in the "New

Monthly Magazine," from Mr. Patmore in the "Court Magazine," and from Mr. Moxon in Leigh Hunt's "London Journal," besides others whose authors are unknown to me; and subsequently many affectionate allusions, from pens which his own had inspired, have been gleaned out in various passages of "Blackwood," "Fraser," "Tait," and almost every periodical work of reputation. The "Recollections of Coleridge" by Mr. Allsop, also breathed the spirit of admiration for his elevated genius, which the author — one whom Lamb held in the highest esteem for himself, and for his devotion to Coleridge — had for years expressed both in his words and in deeds. But it is not possible for the subtlest characteristic power, even when animated by the warmest personal regard, to give to those who never had the privilege of his companionship an idea of what Lamb was. There was an apparent contradiction in him, which seemed an inconsistency between thoughts closely associated, and which was in reality nothing but the contradiction of his genius and his fortune, fantastically exhibiting itself in different aspects, which close intimacy could alone appreciate. He would startle you with the finest perception of truth, separating, by a phrase, the real from a tissue of conventional falsehoods, and the next moment, by some whimsical invention, make you "doubt truth to be a liar." He would touch the inmost pulse of profound affection, and then break off in some jest, which would seem profane "to ears polite," but carry as profound a meaning to those who had the right key, as his most pathetic suggestions: and where he loved and doted most, he would vent the overflowing of his feelings in words that looked like rudeness. He touches

on this strange resource of love in his "Farewell to Tobacco," in a passage which may explain some startling freedoms with those he himself loved most dearly.

—— "Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplext lovers use,
At a need, when in despair,
To paint forth the fairest fair;
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike;
And, instead of 'dearest Miss,'
Jewel, honey, sweetheart, bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her cockatrice and siren,
Basilisk, and all that's evil,
Witch, hyena, mermaid, devil,
Ethiop, wench, and blackamoor,
Monkey, ape, and twenty more;
Friendly traitress, loving foe,—
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not."

Thus, in the very excess of affection to his sister, whom he loved above all else on earth, he would sometimes address to her some words of seeming reproach, yet so tinged with a humorous irony that none but an entire stranger could mistake his drift. His anxiety for her health, even in his most convivial moments, was unceasing. If, in company, he perceived she looked languid, he would repeatedly ask her, "Mary, does your head ache?" "Don't you feel unwell?" and would be satisfied by none of her gentle assurances, that his fears were groundless. He was always afraid of her sensibilities being too deeply engaged, and if in

her presence any painful accident or history was discussed, he would turn the conversation with some desperate joke. Miss Beetham, the author of the "Lay of Marie," which Lamb esteemed one of the most graceful and truly feminine works in a literature rich in female genius, who has reminded me of the trait in some recollections of Lamb, with which she has furnished me, relates, that once when she was speaking to Miss Lamb of Charles, and in her earnestness, Miss Lamb had laid her hand kindly on the eulogist's shoulder, he came up hastily and interrupted them, saying, "Come, come, we must not talk sentimentally," and took up the conversation in his gayest strain.

Many of Lamb's witty and curious sayings have been repeated since his death, which are worthy to be held in undying remembrance; but they give no idea of the general tenor of his conversation, which was far more singular and delightful in the traits, which could never be recalled, than in the epigrammatic turns which it is possible to quote. It was fretted into perpetual eddies of verbal felicity and happy thought, with little tranquil intervals reflecting images of exceeding elegance and grace. He sometimes poured out puns in startling succession; sometimes curiously contrived a train of sentences to introduce the catastrophe of a pun, which, in that case, was often startling from its own demerit. At Mr. Cary's one day, he introduced and kept up an elaborate dissertation on the various uses and abuses of the word *nice;* and when its variations were exhausted, showed what he had been driving at by exclaiming, "Well! now we have held a Council of Nice." "A pun," said he in a letter to Coleridge, in which he eulogized the Odes and Addresses of his

friends Hood and Reynolds, "is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a makeweight. You shall read one of the Addresses twice over and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good, or better, than when you discover them. A pun is a noble thing *per se*. O never bring it in as an accessory! A pun is a sole digest of reflection (vide my 'Aids' to that awaking from a savage state); it is entire; it fills the mind; it is as perfect as a sonnet; better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of humor. It knows it should have an establishment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day; I forget which it was." Indeed, Lamb's choicest puns and humorous expressions could not be recollected. They were born of the evanescent feeling, and died with it; "one moment *bright*, then gone forever." The shocks of pleasurable surprise were so rapid in succession, and the thoughts suggested so new, that one destroyed the other, and left only the sense of delight behind. Frequently as I had the happiness of seeing him during twenty years, I can add nothing from my own store of recollection to those which have been collected by others, and those I will abstain from repeating, so vapid would be their effect when printed compared to that which they produced when, stammered out, they gave to the moment its victory.

It cannot be denied or concealed that Lamb's excellences, moral and intellectual, were blended with a single frailty; so intimately associating itself with all that was most charming in the one, and sweetest in the other, that, even if it were right to withdraw it wholly from notice, it would be impossible without it to do justice to his virtues. The eagerness with which he

would quaff exciting liquors, from an early period of life, proved that to a physical peculiarity of constitution was to be ascribed, in the first instance, the strength of the temptation with which he was assailed. This kind of corporeal need; the struggles of deep thought to overcome the bashfulness and the impediment of speech, which obstructed its utterance; the dull, heavy, irksome labors which hung heavy on his mornings, and dried up his spirits; and still more, the sorrows which had environed him, and which prompted him to snatch a fearful joy; and the unbounded craving after sympathy with human feelings, conspired to disarm his power of resisting when the means of indulgence were actually before him. Great exaggerations have been prevalent on this subject, countenanced, no doubt, by the "Confessions" which, in the prodigality of his kindness, he contributed to his friend's collection of essays and authorities against the use of spirituous liquors; for, although he had rarely the power to overcome the temptation when presented, he made heroic sacrifices in flight. His final abandonment of tobacco, after many ineffectual attempts, was one of these — a princely sacrifice. He had loved smoking, "not wisely, but too well," for he had been content to use the coarsest varieties of the "great plant." When Dr. Parr, — who took only the finest tobacco, used to half fill his pipe with salt, and smoked with a philosophic calmness, — saw Lamb smoking the strongest preparation of the weed, puffing out smoke like some furious Enchanter, he gently laid down his pipe, and asked him, how he had acquired his power of smoking at such a rate? Lamb replied, "I toiled after it, sir, as some men toil after virtue." Partly to shun the temptations

of society, and partly to preserve his sister's health, he fled from London, where his pleasures and his heart were, and buried himself in the solitude of the country, to him always dismal. He would even deny himself the gratification of meeting Wordsworth or Southey, or use it very sparingly during their visits to London, in order that the accompaniments of the table might not entice him to excess. And if sometimes, after miles of solitary communing with his own sad thoughts, the village inn did invite him to quaff a glass of sparkling ale; and if when his retreat was lighted up with the presence of some old friend, he was unable to refrain from the small portion which was too much for his feeble frame, let not the stout-limbed and the happy exult over the consequence! Drinking with him, except so far as it cooled a feverish thirst, was not a sensual, but an intellectual pleasure; it lighted up his fading fancy, enriched his humor, and impelled the struggling thought or beautiful image into day; and perhaps by requiring for him some portion of that allowance which he extended to all human frailties, endeared him the more to those who so often received, and were delighted to bestow it.

Lamb's indulgence to the failings of others could hardly indeed be termed allowance; the name of charity is too cold to suit it. He did not merely love his friends in spite of their errors, but he loved them errors and all; so near to him was everything human. He numbered among his associates, men of all varieties of opinion — philosophical, religious, and political — and found something to like, not only in the men themselves, but in themselves as associated with their theories and their schemes. In the high and calm, but

devious speculations of Godwin; in the fierce hatreds of Hazlitt; in the gentle and glorious mysticism of Coleridge; in the sturdy opposition of Thelwall to the government; in Leigh Hunt's softened and fancy-streaked patriotism; in the gallant Toryism of Stoddart; he found traits which made the individuals more dear to him. When Leigh Hunt was imprisoned in Cold Bath Fields for a libel, Lamb was one of his most constant visitors — and when Thelwall was striving to bring the "Champion" into notice, Lamb was ready to assist him with his pen, and to fancy himself, for the time, a Jacobin.* In this large intellectual tolerance,

* The following little poem — quite out of Lamb's usual style — was written for that journal.

THE THREE GRAVES.

Close by the ever-burning brimstone beds,
Where Bedloe, Oates, and Judas hide their heads,
I saw great Satan like a sexton stand,
With his intolerable spade in hand,
Digging three graves. Of coffin-shape they were,
For those who, coffinless, must enter there,
With unblest rites. The shrouds were of that cloth
Which Clotho weaved in her blackest wrath;
The dismal tint oppress'd the eye, that dwelt
Upon it long, like darkness to be felt.
The pillows to these baleful beds were toads,
Large, living, livid, melancholy loads,
Whose softness shock'd. Worms of all monstrous size
Crawl'd round; and one upcoil'd, which never dies,
A doleful bell, inculcating despair,
Was always ringing in the heavy air.
And all around the detestable pit
Strange headless ghosts and quarter'd forms did flit;
Rivers of blood from living traitors spilt,
By treachery stung from poverty to guilt.
I ask'd the fiend, for whom those rites were meant?
"These graves," quoth he, "when life's brief oil is spent,
When the dark night comes, and they're sinking bedwards,
I mean for Castles, Oliver, and Edwards."

he resembled Professor Wilson, who, notwithstanding his own decided opinions, has a compass of mind large enough to embrace all others which have noble alliances within its range.* But not only to opposite opinions, and devious habits of thought, was Lamb indulgent; he discovered "the soul of goodness in things evil" so vividly, that the surrounding evil disappeared from his mental vision. Nothing — no discovery of error or of crime — could divorce his sympathy from a man who had once engaged it. He saw in the spendthrift, the outcast, only the innocent companion of his school-days or the joyous associate of his convivial hours, and he did not even make penitence or reform a condition of his regard. Perhaps he had less sympathy with philanthropic schemers for the improvement of the world than with any other class of men; but of these he numbered two of the greatest, Clarkson the destroyer of the slave-trade, and Basil Montague the constant opponent of the judicial infliction of death; and the labors of neither have been in vain!

To those who were not intimately acquainted with Lamb, the strong disinclination to contemplate another state of being, which he sometimes expressed in his serious conversation, and which he has solemnly confessed in his "New Year's Eve," might cast a doubt on feelings which were essentially pious. The same peculiarity of nature which attached him to the narrow

* Lamb only once met that remarkable person, — who has probably more points of resemblance to him than any other living poet, — and was quite charmed with him. They walked out from Enfield together, and strolled happily a long summer's day, not omitting, however, a call for a refreshing draught. Lamb called for a pot of ale or porter — half of which would have been his own usual allowance; and was delighted to hear the Professor, on the appearance of the foaming tankard, say reproachfully to the waiter, "And one for me!"

and crowded streets, in preference to the mountain and the glen — which made him loth to quit even painful circumstances and unpleasant or ill-timed company; the desire to seize and grasp all that was nearest, bound him to earth, and prompted his sympathies to revolve within a narrow circle. Yet in that very power of adhesion to outward things, might be discerned the strength of a spirit destined to live beyond them. Within the contracted sphere of his habits and desires, he detected the subtlest essences of Christian kindliness, shed over it a light from heaven, and peopled it with divine fancies and

> "Thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality."

Although he numbered among his associates free-thinkers and skeptics, he had a great dislike to any profane handling of sacred subjects, and always discouraged polemical discussion. One evening, when Irving and Coleridge were in company, and a young gentleman had spoken slightingly of religion, Lamb remained silent; but when the party broke up, he said to the youth who had thus annoyed his guests, "Pray did you come here in a hat, sir, or in a turban?

The range of Lamb's reading was varied, but yet peculiar. He rejoiced in all old English authors, but cared little for the moderns, except one or two; and those whom he loved as authors because they were his friends. Attached always to things of flesh and blood rather than to "the bare earth and mountains bare, and grass in the green field," he chiefly loved the great dramatists, whose beauties he supported, and sometimes heightened, in his suggestive criticisms. While he en-

joyed Wordsworth's poetry, especially "The Excursion," with a love which grew upon him from his youth, he would repeat some of Pope's divine compliments, or Dryden's lines, weighty with sterling sense or tremendous force of satire, with eyes trembling into tears. The comedies of Wycherley, and Congreve, and Farquhar, were not to him gross and sensual, but airy, delicate creations, framed out of coarse materials it might be, but evaporating in wit and grace, harmless effusions of the intellect and the fancy. The ponderous dulness of old controversialists, the dead weight of volumes of once fierce dispute, of which time had exhausted the venom, did not appall him. He liked the massive reading of the old Quaker records, the huge density of old schoolmen, better than the flippancy of modern criticism. If you spoke of Lord Byron, he would turn the subject by quoting the lines descriptive of his namesake in *Love's Labor Lost* — "Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Byron," &c. — for he could find nothing to revere or love in the poetry of that extraordinary but most uncomfortable poet; except the apostrophe to Parnassus, in which he exults in the sight of the real mountain instead of the mere poetic image. All the Laras, and Giaours, and Childe Harolds, were to him but "unreal mockeries," — the phantasms of a feverish dream, — forms which did not appeal to the sympathies of mankind, and never can find root among them. Shelley's poetry, too, was icy cold to him; except one or two of the minor poems, in which he could not help admiring the exquisite beauty of the expression; and the "Cenci," in which, notwithstanding the painful nature of the subject, there is a warmth and passion, and a correspondent simplicity

of diction, which prove how mighty a poet the author would have become had he lived long enough for his feelings to have free discourse with his creative power. Responding only to the touch of human affection, he could not bear poetry which, instead of making the whole world kin, renders our own passions and frailties and virtues strange to us; presents them at a distance in splendid masquerade; exalts them into new and unauthorized mythology, and crystallizes all our freshest loves and mantling joys into clusters of radiant fancies. He made some amends for his indifference to Shelley, by his admiration of Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein," which he thought the most extraordinary realization of the idea of a being out of nature which had ever been effected. For the Scotch novels he cared very little, not caring to be puzzled with new plots, and preferring to read Fielding, and Smollett, and Richardson, whose stories were familiar, over and over again, to being worried with the task of threading the maze of fresh adventure. But the good-naturedness of Sir Walter to all his contemporaries won his admiration, and he heartily rejoiced in the greatness of his fame, and the rich rewards showered upon him, and desired they might accumulate for the glory of literature and the triumph of kindness. He was never introduced to Sir Walter; but he used to speak with gratitude and pleasure of the circumstances under which he saw him once in Fleet Street. A man, in the dress of a mechanic, stopped him just at Inner Temple-gate, and said, touching his hat, "I beg your pardon, sir, but perhaps you would like to see Sir Walter Scott; that is he just crossing the road;" and Lamb stammered out his hearty thanks to his truly humane informer.

Of his own writings it is now superfluous to speak; for, after having encountered long derision and neglect, they have taken their place among the classics of his language. They stand alone, at once singular and delightful. They are all carefully elaborated; yet never were works written in a higher defiance to the conventional pomp of style. A sly hit, a happy pun, a humorous combination, lets the light into the intricacies of the subject, and supplies the place of ponderous sentences. As his serious conversation was his best, so his serious writing is far preferable to his fantastical humors, — cheering as they are, and suggestive ever as they are of high and invigorating thoughts. Seeking his materials, for the most part, in the common paths of life, — often in the humblest, — he gives an importance to everything, and sheds a grace over all. The spirit of gentility seems to breathe around all his persons; he detects the venerable and the excellent in the narrowest circumstances and humblest conditions, with the same subtilty which reveals the hidden soul of the greatest works of genius. In all things he is most human. Of all modern writers, his works are most immediately directed to give us heart-ease and to make us happy.

Among the felicities of Lamb's chequered life, that which he esteemed most, was his intimate friendship with some of the greatest of our poets, — Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth; the last and greatest of whom has paid a tribute to his memory, which may fitly close this memoir.

"To a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is Sacred. Here he lies apart
From the great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught; and humbly earned his bread,
To the strict labors of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress
His spirit, but the recompense was high;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire;
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye, and overflowing heart:
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired — works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humor and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
Had been derived the name he bore — a name,
Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
A soul by resignation sanctified:
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
O, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!
* * * * *
From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain:
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,

The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend,
But more in show than truth; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers;
And taking up a voice shall speak (though still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity,
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.

'Wonderful' hath been
The love established between man and man,
'Passing the love of women;' and between
Man and his helpmate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love
Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human form
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine;
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister — 'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found — for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanizing, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought —
More than sufficient recompense!

Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
Was as the love of mothers; and when years,

Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And seasons' difference — a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they — and such through life they *might* have been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, through all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing — to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.

O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown."

FINAL MEMORIALS

OF

CHARLES LAMB:

CONSISTING

CHIEFLY OF HIS LETTERS NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED, WITH SKETCHES OF SOME OF HIS COMPANIONS.

BY

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD, D. C. L.,

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

TO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ESQ. D. C. L.,

POET LAUREATE,

THESE FINAL MEMORIALS

OF ONE WHO CHERISHED HIS FRIENDSHIP AS A COMFORT AMIDST GRIEFS
AND A GLORY AMIDST DEPRESSIONS, ARE,
WITH AFFECTION AND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHOSE PRIDE IS TO HAVE BEEN IN OLD TIME HIS EARNEST
ADMIRER, AND ONE OF WHOSE FONDEST WISHES IS
THAT HE MAY BE LONG SPARED TO ENJOY FAME, RARELY ACCORDED
TO THE LIVING.

PREFACE.

NEARLY twelve years have elapsed since the Letters of Charles Lamb, accompanied by such slight sketch of his Life as might link them together, and explain the circumstances to which they refer, were given to the world. In the Preface to that work, reference was made to letters yet remaining unpublished, and to a period when a more complete estimate might be formed of the singular and delightful character of the writer than was there presented. That period has arrived. Several of his friends, who might possibly have felt a moment's pain at the publication of some of those effusions of kindness, in which they are sportively mentioned, have been removed by death; and the dismissal of the last, and to him the dearest of all, his sister, while it has brought to her the repose she sighed for ever since she lost him, has released his biographer from a difficulty which has hitherto prevented a due appreciation of some of his noblest qualities. Her most lamentable, but most innocent agency in the event which consigned her for life to his protection, forbade the introduction of any letter, or allusion to any incident, which might ever, in the long and dismal twilight of consciousness which she endured, shock her by the recurrence of long past and terrible sorrows;

and the same consideration for her induced the suppression of every passage which referred to the malady with which she was through life at intervals afflicted. Although her death had removed the objection to a reference to her intermittent suffering, it still left a momentous question, whether even then, when no relative remained to be affected by the disclosure, it would be right to unveil the dreadful calamity which marked one of its earliest visitations, and which, though known to most of those who were intimate with the surviving sufferers, had never been publicly associated with their history. When, however, I reflected that the truth, while in no wise affecting the gentle excellence of one of them, casts new and solemn lights on the character of the other; that while his frailties have received an ample share of that indulgence which he extended to all human weaknesses, their chief exciting cause has been hidden; that his moral strength and the extent of his self-sacrifice have been hitherto unknown to the world; I felt that to develope all which is essential to the just appreciation of his rare excellence, was due both to him and to the public. While I still hesitated as to the extent of disclosure needful for this purpose, my lingering doubts were removed by the appearance of a full statement of the melancholy event, with all the details capable of being collected from the newspapers of the time, in the "British Quarterly Review," and the diffusion of the passage, extracted thence, through several other journals. After this publication, no doubt could remain as to the propriety of publishing the letters of Lamb on this event, eminently exalting the characters of himself and his sister, and enabling the reader to judge of the sacrifice which followed it.

I have also availed myself of the opportunity of introducing some letters, the objection to publishing which has been obviated by the same great healer, Time; and of adding others which I deemed too trivial for the public eye, when the whole wealth of his letters lay before me, collected by Mr. Moxon from the distinguished correspondents of Lamb, who kindly responded to his request for permission to make the public sharers in their choice epistolary treasures. The appreciation which the letters already published, both in this country and in America — perhaps even more remarkable in America than in England — have attained, and the interest which the lightest fragments of Lamb's correspondence, which have accidentally appeared in other quarters, have excited, convince me that some letters which I withheld, as doubting their worthiness of the public eye, will not now be unwelcome. There is, indeed, scarcely a note — a *notelet* — (as he used to call his very little letters) Lamb ever wrote, which has not some tinge of that quaint sweetness, some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim, which distinguish him from all other poets and humorists. I do not think the reader will complain that — with some very slight exceptions, which personal considerations still render necessary — I have made him a partaker of *all* the epistolary treasures which the generosity of Lamb's correspondents placed at Mr. Moxon's disposal.

When I first considered the materials of this work, I purposed to combine them with a new edition of the former volumes; but the consideration that such a course would be unjust to the possessors of those volumes induced me to present them to the public in a

separate form. In accomplishing that object, I have felt the difficulty of connecting the letters so as to render their attendant circumstances intelligible, without falling into repetition of passages in the previous biography. My attempt has been to make these volumes subsidiary to the former, and yet complete in themselves; but I fear its imperfection will require much indulgence from the reader. The italics and capitals used in printing the letters are always those of the writer; and the little passages sometimes prefixed to letters, have been printed as in the originals.

In venturing to introduce some notices of Lamb's deceased companions, I have been impelled partly by a desire to explain any allusion in the letters which might be misunderstood by those who are not familiar with the fine vagaries of Lamb's affection, and partly by the hope of giving some faint notion of the entire circle with which Lamb is associated in the recollection of a few survivors.

T. N. T.

LONDON, *July*, 1848.

FINAL

MEMORIALS OF CHARLES LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

LETTERS OF LAMB TO COLERIDGE, IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1796.

In the year 1795, Charles Lamb resided with his father, mother, and sister, in lodgings at No. 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn. The father was rapidly sinking into dotage; the mother suffered under an infirmity which deprived her of the use of her limbs; and the sister not only undertook the office of daily and nightly attendance on her mother, but sought to add by needle-work to their slender resources. Their income then consisted of an annuity which Mr. Lamb the elder derived from the old Bencher, Mr. Salt, whom he had faithfully served for many years; Charles's salary, which being that of a clerk of three years' standing in the India House, could have been but scanty; and a small payment made for board by an old maiden aunt, who resided with them. In this year, Lamb, being just twenty years of age, began to write verses — partly incited by the example of his old friend, Coleridge, whom he regarded with as much

reverence as affection, and partly inspired by an attachment to a young lady residing in the neighborhood of Islington, who is commemorated in his early verses as "the fair-haired maid." How his love prospered we cannot ascertain; but we know how nobly that love, and all hope of the earthly blessings attendant on such an affection, were resigned on the catastrophe which darkened the following year. In the mean time, his youth was lonely —rendered the more so by the recollection of the society of Coleridge, who had just left London — of Coleridge in the first bloom of life and genius, unshaded by the mysticism which it afterwards glorified — full of boundless ambition, love, and hope! There was a tendency to insanity in his family, which had been more than once developed in his sister; and it was no matter of surprise that in the dreariness of his solitude it fell upon him; and that, at the close of the year, he was subjected for a few weeks to the restraint of the insane. The wonder is that, amidst all the difficulties, the sorrows, and the excitements of his succeeding forty years, it never recurred. Perhaps the true cause of this remarkable exemption — an exemption the more remarkable when his afflictions are considered in association with one single frailty — will be found in the sudden claim made on his moral and intellectual nature by a terrible exigency, and by his generous answer to that claim; so that a life of self-sacrifice was rewarded by the preservation of unclouded reason.

The following letter to Coleridge, then residing at Bristol, which is undated, but which is proved by circumstances to have been written in the spring of 1796, and which is probably the earliest of Lamb's letters

which have been preserved, contains his own account of this seizure. Allusion to the same event will be perceived in two letters of the same year, after which no reference to it appears in his correspondence, nor can any be remembered in his conversations with his dearest friends.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1796.

"Dear C——, make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life; so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me if I had it.

"When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em; a guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the work. The extracts from it in the 'Monthly Review,' and the short passages in your 'Watchman,' seem to me much superior to anything in his partnership account with Lovell. Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your numbers, from 'Religious Musings;' but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that paper; it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of 'dissonant mood' to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the 'Evidences of Religion.' There is need of multiplying such books a

hundredfold in this philosophical age, to *prevent* converts to atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards.

"Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy living with his mother, a widow-lady. He will, of course, initiate him quickly in 'whatsoever things are lovely, honorable, and of good report.' Coleridge! I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol. My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad-house, at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was! And many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume, if all were told. My sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you. I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which, if I finish, I publish. White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) 'Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow,' &c., a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw. Coleridge! it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

"The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry, but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals.

TO MY SISTER.

"If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind
And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,
And waters clear, of Reason; and for me
Let this my verse the poor atonement be —
My verse, which thou to praise wert e'er inclined
Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
No blemish. Thou to me didst ever show
Kindest affection; and wouldst oft-times lend
An ear to the desponding love-sick lay,
Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

"With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C——, I conclude.

"Yours sincerely, LAMB."

"Your 'Conciones ad Populum' are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

"Write when convenient — not as a task, for here is nothing in this letter to answer.

"We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C., not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

"My civic and poetic compliments to Southey if at Bristol; — why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards — the small minnow, I!"

In the spring of this year, Coleridge proposed the association of those first efforts of the young clerk in the India House, which he had prompted and praised, with his own, in a new edition of his Poems, to which Mr. Charles Lloyd also proposed to contribute. The

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following letter comprises Sonnets transmitted to Coleridge for this purpose, accompanied by remarks so characteristic as to induce the hope that the reader will forgive the introduction of these small gems of verse which were published in due course, for the sake of the original setting.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1796.

"I am in such violent pain with the headache, that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the 'Joan of Arc,' I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before to-morrow (Wednesday) morning. The following Sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last summer: —

"The Lord of Light shakes off his drowsyhed.*
Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty sun,
And girds himself his mighty race to run;
Meantime, by truant love of rambling led
I turn my back on thy detested walls,
Proud city, and thy sons I leave behind
A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,
Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.
I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,
That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,
Of merrier days, of Love and Islington,
Kindling anew the flames of past desire;
And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,
To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

"The last line is a copy of Bowles's, 'To the green

* "Drowsyhed" I have met with, I think, in Spenser. 'Tis an old thing, but it rhymes with led, and rhyming covers a multitude of licenses — C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

hamlet in the peaceful plain.' Your ears are not so very fastidious; many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a Sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my first Sonnet 'that mocked my step with many a lonely glade.'

"When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,
Green winding walks, and shady pathways sweet;
Oft-times would Anna seek the silent scene,
Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.
No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;
Her image only in these pleasant ways
Meets me self-wandering, where in happier days
I held free converse with my fair-haired maid.
I passed the little cottage which she loved,
The cottage which did once my all contain;
It spake of days that ne'er must come again;
Spake to my heart, and much my heart was moved.
Now 'Fair befal thee, gentle maid,' said I;
And from the cottage turned me with a sigh.

"The next retains a few lines from a Sonnet of mine which you once remarked had no 'body of thought' in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it: —

"A timid grace sits trembling in her eye,
As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight;
Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,
That steeps in kind oblivious ecstacy
The care-crazed mind, like some still melody:
Speaking most plain the thoughts which do possess
Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,
And innocent loves,* and maiden purity:
A look whereof might heal the cruel smart
Of changed friends; or Fortune's wrongs unkind;

* Cowley uses this phrase with a somewhat different meaning. I meant, loves of relatives, friends, &c. — C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart
Of him, who hates his brethren of mankind:
Turned are those beams from me, who fondly yet
Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

"The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last, in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote — 'Methinks how dainty sweet.'

"We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
The youngest, and the loveliest far, I ween,
And Innocence her name. The time has been
We two did love each other's company;
Time was, we two had wept to have been apart:
But when, with show of seeming good beguil'd,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man's society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart —
My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved! who can tell me where thou art —
In what delicious Eden to be found —
That I may seek thee the wide world around?

"Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangor, these two lines to 'Happiness.'

Nun, sober and devout, where art thou fled
To hide in shades thy meek contented head?

Lines eminently beautiful; but I do not remember having read them previously, for the credit of my tenth and eleventh lines. Parnell has two lines (which probably suggested the above) to 'Contentment.'

Whither, ah! whither art thou fled
To hide thy meek contented * head?

* An odd epithet for Contentment in a poet so poetical as Parnell. — C. Lamb's Manuscripts.

"Cowley's exquisite 'Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey,' suggested the phrase of 'we two.'

> Was there a tree that did not know
> The love betwixt us two?

"So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse, I am so dismally slow and sterile of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few independent, unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems, for which I am very thankful. I have one more favor to beg of you, that you never mention Mr. May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-'em-ists? We have just learned that my poor brother has had a sad accident, a large stone blown down by yesterday's high wind has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner; he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge! there are 10,000 objections against my paying you a visit at Bristol; it cannot be else; but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibles, that we may not be out of humor with present insipids. Should anything bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

"I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth myself, but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his 'teaching the young idea how to shoot.' Knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to

pun in his company, you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me, — 'he would teach him to shoot!' Poor Le Grice! if wit alone could entitle a man to respect, &c., he has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations. When I send White's book, I will add that. I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. 'Between you two there should be peace,' tho' I must say I have borne him no good-will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your 'Watchman.' Very decent things. So much for to-night from your afflicted, headachey, sore-throatey, humble servant,

"C. LAMB."

"*Tuesday night.* — Of your 'Watchman,' the 'Review of Burke' was the best prose. I augured great things from the first number. There is some exquisite poetry interspersed. I have re-read the extract from the 'Religious Musings,' and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favorable moment, and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be anything in it approaching to tumidity (which I meant not to infer; by elaborate I meant simply labored), it is the gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the evils of existing society; 'snakes, lions, hyenas, and behemoths,' is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of 'The Simoom,' of 'Frenzy and Ruin,' of 'The Whore of Babylon,' and 'The Cry of the Foul Spirits disherited of Earth,' and

'the strange beatitude' which the good man shall recognize in heaven, as well as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness (I have unconsciously included every part of it), form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your sixth number.

'This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month.'

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed-up daisy you seem to have had in mind. Your complaint, that of your readers some thought there was too much, some too little original matter in your numbers, reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the 'Critic.' 'Too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, sir, there is too much incident.' I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel, the first Sclavonian Song. The expression in the second, — 'more happy to be unhappy in hell;' is it not very quaint? Accept my thanks, in common with those of all who love good poetry, for 'The Braes of Yarrow.' I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in human flesh and sinews. Coleridge! you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employed on his translation of the Italian, &c., poems of Milton for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge! to an idler like myself, to write and receive letters are both very pleasant, but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do; for your loco-restive and all your

idle propensities, of course, have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in, but no parcel; yet this is Tuesday. Farewell, then, till to-morrow, for a niche and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way I hope you do not send your own only copy of 'Joan of Arc;' I will in that case return it immediately.

"Your parcel *is* come; you have been *lavish* of your presents.

"Wordsworth's poem I have hurried through, not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I spoke of him above, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles; God send you through 'em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid; the very word is galling to the ears. I have read all your 'Religious Musings' with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remaining things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind 'the voice, the look,' of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart and to the ears of the by-standers. I rather wish you had left the monody on Chatterton concluding as it did abruptly. It had more of unity. The conclusion of your 'Religious Musings,' I fear will entitle you to the reproof of your beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The very last words, 'I exercise my young noviciate

thought in ministeries of heart-stirring song,' though not now new to me, cannot be enough admired. To speak politely, they are a well-turned compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read 'Joan of Arc,' &c. I have read your lines at the beginning of second book: they are worthy of Milton; but in my mind yield to your 'Religious Musings.' I shall read the whole carefully, and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the 'Musings,' that beginning 'My Pensive Sara' gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite; they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs. C. checking your wild wanderings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than anything to your good lady, and your own self-reproof that follows delighted us. 'Tis a charming poem throughout (you have well remarked that charming, admirable, exquisite are the words expressive of feelings more than conveying of ideas, else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalizing). I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spenser, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. I am glad you resume the 'Watchman.' Change the name; leave out all articles of news, and whatever things are peculiar to newspapers, and confine yourself to ethics, verse, criticism — or rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the 'Spectator,' and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor, rely on my inclinations. Coleridge! in reading your 'Religious Musings,' I felt a transient superiority over you. I *have*

seen Priestly. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honor him almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *Sermons*, if you never read 'em. You have doubtless read his books illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his in answer to Paine, there is a preface giving an account of the man, and his services to men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend, well worth your reading.

"*Tuesday eve.* — Forgive my prolixity, which is yet too brief for all I could wish to say. God give you comfort, and all that are of your household! Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs. C.

"C. LAMB."

The parcel mentioned in the last letter, brought the "Joan of Arc," and a request from Coleridge, that Lamb would freely criticize his poems with a view to their selection and correction for the contemplated volume. The reply is contained in the following letter which, written on several days, begins at the extreme top of the first page, without any ceremony of introduction, and is comprised in three sides and a bit of foolscap.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"With 'Joan of Arc' I have been delighted, amazed; I had not presumed to expect anything of such excellence from Southey. Why the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns, and Bowles, Cowper, and ——; fill up the blank how you please;

I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26, 'Fierce and terrible Benevolence!' is a phrase full of grandeur and originality. The whole context made me feel *possessed*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, 'It is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely-fibred human frame,' and what follows, pleased me mightily. In the 2nd Book, the first forty lines in particular are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed the whole vision of the Palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your simile of the Laplander, 'By Niemi's lake, or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone of Solfar-Kappar,'* will bear comparison with any in Milton for fulness of circumstance and lofty-pacedness of versification. Southey's similes, though many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books, the simile of the oak in the storm occurs, I think, four times. To return; the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why monarchs take delight in war. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking, it is correct. Page 98, 'Dead is the Douglas! cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan,' &c., are of kindred excellence with Gray's 'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,' &c. How famously the Maid

* Lapland mountains. The verses referred to are published in Mr. Coleridge's Poem entitled "The Destiny of Nations: a Vision."

baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irrefragable, 'with all their trumpery!' Page 126, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard Son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309, in the heat of the battle, had better been omitted; they are not very striking, and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in dreams 'all things are that seem,' is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed — a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dreamed of. Page 315, I need only *mention* those lines ending with 'She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart!' They are good imitative lines, 'he toiled and toiled, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never-ending woe.' Page 347, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with creating and preserving love) is very confused, and sickens me with a load of useless personifications; else that ninth Book is the finest in the volume — an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible: I have never read either, even in translation, but such I conceive to be the manner of Dante or Ariosto. The tenth Book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finished, I was astonished at the infrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too little in battle; Dunois perhaps the same; Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the

mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos abounding throughout the poem, passages which the author of 'Crazy Kate' might have written. Has not Master Southey spoke very slightingly, in his preface, and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer? What makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives 'did,' and 'does?' They have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton: I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living poets besides. What says Coleridge? The 'Monody on Henderson' is *immensely good*, the rest of that little volume is *readable, and above mediocrity.* I proceed to a more pleasant task; pleasant because the poems are yours; pleasant because you impose the task on me; and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me, to sit in judgment upon your rhymes. First, though, let me thank you again and again, in my own and my sister's name, for your invitations; nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow! he is very feverish and light-headed, but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favorable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation: God send not! We are necessarily confined with him all the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you.

"Thank you for your frequent letters; you are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no ac-

quaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society; and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as though it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters! Do not, however, burden yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea; thence must wait upon my brother; so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell.

Wednesday.

"*Thursday.* — I will first notice what is new to me. Thirteenth page; 'The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul' is a nervous line, and the six first lines of page 14 are very pretty; the twenty-first effusion a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spenser is very sweet, particularly at the close: the thirty-fifth effusion is most exquisite; that line in particular, 'And, tranquil, muse upon tranquillity.' It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd, a modern one I would be understood to mean, a Damætas, one that keeps other people's sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has, however, great merit. In your fourth epistle that is an exquisite paragraph, and fancy-full, of 'A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow,' &c. &c. 'Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers' is a sweet line, and so are the three next. The concluding simile is far-fetched — 'tempest-honored' is a quaintish phrase.

"Yours is a poetical family. I was much surprised and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the fifth epistle. I dare not *criticize* the 'Religious Musings;' I like not to *select* any part, where all is excellent. I can only admire, and thank you for it in the name of a Christian, as well as a lover of good poetry; only let me ask, is not that thought and those words in Young, 'stands in the sun' — or is it only such as Young, in one of his *better moments*, might have writ? —

> 'Believe thou, O my soul,
> Life is a vision shadowy of truth;
> And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
> Shapes of a dream!'

I thank you for these lines in the name of a necessarian, and for what follows in next paragraph, in the name of a child of fancy. After all, you cannot, nor ever will, write anything with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed hope; you had

> ———'many an holy lay
> That, mourning, soothed the mourner on his way;'

"I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the sense. When I read in your little volume, your nineteenth effusion, or the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth, or what you call the 'Sigh,' I think I hear *you* again. I imagine to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we have sat together through the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with Poesy. When you left

London, I felt a dismal void in my heart. I found myself cut off, at one and the same time, from two most dear to me. 'How blest with ye the path could I have trod of quiet life!' In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence the tide of melancholy rushed in again and did its worst mischief by overwhelming my reason. I have recovered, but feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind, but habits are strong things, and my religious fervors are confined, alas! to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion. A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it: I will not be very troublesome! At some future time I will amuse you with an account, as full as my memory will permit, of the strange turn my frenzy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of envy; for, while it lasted, I had many, many hours of pure happiness. Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy till you have gone mad! All now seems to me vapid, comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression. Your 'Monody' is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures; what I am going to propose would make it more compressed, and, I think, more energic, though I am sensible at the expense of many beautiful lines. Let it begin 'Is this the land of song-ennobled line?' and proceed to 'Otway's famished form;' then, 'Thee Chatterton,' to 'blaze of Seraphim;' then, 'clad in

Nature's rich array,' to 'orient day;' then, 'but soon the scathing lightning,' to 'blighted land;' then 'sublime of thought,' to 'his bosom glows;' then

> 'But soon upon *his* poor unsheltered head
> Did Penury her sickly mildew shed;
> And soon are fled the charms of early grace,
> And joy's wild gleams that lightened o'er his face.'

Then 'youth of tumultuous soul' to 'sigh,' as before. The rest may all stand down to 'gaze upon the waves below.' What follows now may come next as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are, indeed, in themselves, very sweet:

> 'And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
> Hanging enraptured on thy stately song!'

in particular, perhaps. If I am obscure, you may understand me by counting lines: I have proposed omitting twenty-four lines: I feel that thus compressed it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me; for who shall go about to bring opinions to the bed of Procrustes, and introduce among the sons of men a monotony of identical feelings? I only propose with diffidence. Reject you, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the color of a coat or the pattern of a buckle, where our fancies differed.

"The 'Pixies' is a perfect thing, and so are the 'Lines on the Spring,' page 28. The 'Epitaph on an Infant,' like a 'Jack-o'-lanthorn, has danced about (or like Dr. Forster's scholars) out of the 'Morning Chronicle' into the 'Watchman,' and thence back into your collection. It is very pretty, and you seem to think so, but, maybe, have o'erlooked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deemed sonnets of unrivalled use that way, but your Epitaphs I find,

are the more diffuse. 'Edmund' still holds its place among your best verses. 'Ah! fair delights' to 'roses round,' in your Poem called 'Absence,' recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which *you recited it.* I will not notice, in this tedious (to you) manner, verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestly, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the nineteenth effusion. It would have better ended with 'agony of care:' the two last lines are obvious and unnecessary, and you need not now make fourteen lines of it; now it is re-christened from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the twentieth effusion: 'tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my sister was so ill; I had lost the copy, and I felt not a little proud at seeing my name in your verse. The complaint of Ninathoma (first stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation, of Ossian I ever saw — your 'Restless Gale' excepted. 'To an Infant,' is most sweet; is not 'foodful,' though, very harsh? Would not 'dulcet' fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In 'Edmund,' 'Frenzy! fierce-eyed child' is not so well as 'frantic,' though that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than 'squatting.' In the 'Man of Ross' it *was* a better line thus:

'If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheered moments pass,'

than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding five lines of 'Kosciusko:' call it anything you will but sublime. In my twelfth effusion I had rather have seen what I wrote myself,

though they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines —

'On rose-leaf'd-beds amid your faëry bowers,' &c.

"I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the thirteenth —

'How reason reeled,' &c.,

are good lines, but must spoil the whole with me, who know it is only a fiction of yours, and that the 'rude dashings' did in fact not 'rock me to repose.' I grant the same objection applies not to the former sonnet; but still I love my own feelings; they are dear to memory, though they now and then wake a sigh or a tear. 'Thinking on divers things foredone,' I charge you, Coleridge, spare my ewe-lambs; and though a gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem (I should have no objection to borrow five hundred, and without acknowledging), still, in a sonnet, a personal poem, I do not 'ask my friend the aiding verse;' I would not wrong your feelings, by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting 'em) in such personal poems as 'Thou bleedest, my poor heart,' — 'od so, — I am caught — I have already done it; but that simile I propose abridging, would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the twenty-eighth, however, and in the 'Sigh,' and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poem, 'propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridgandum,' just what you will with it; but spare

my ewe-lambs! That to 'Mrs. Siddons,' now, you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it; but I say unto you again, Coleridge, spare my ewe-lambs! I must confess were they mine, I should omit, *in editione secundâ*, effusions two and three, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of 'Religious Musings,' fifth, seventh, half of the eighth, that 'Written in early youth,' as far as 'thousand eyes,' — though I part not unreluctantly with that lively line —

'Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes,'

and one or two more just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called 'Recollection,' in the fifth number of the 'Watchman,' better, I think, than the remainder of this poem, though not differing materially: as the poem now stands it looks altogether confused; and do not omit those lines upon the 'Early Blossom,' in your sixth number of the 'Watchman;' and I would omit the tenth effusion, or what would do better, alter and improve the last four lines. In fact, I suppose, if they were mine, I should *not* omit 'em; but your verse is, for the most part, so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance, and often, I fear, ill-founded criticisms, and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ache with my long letter; but I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you. You did not tell me whether I was to include the 'Conciones ad Populum' in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime, and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse — if you have nothing else to do. A——, I am sorry to say, is a *confirmed* Atheist;

S——, a cold-hearted, well-bred, conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good.

"How I sympathize with you on the dull duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned E—— and the Prosodist. I shall, however, wait impatiently for the articles in the 'Critical Review,' next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you! Coleridge! I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snugify you for life. 'Tis a selfish, but natural wish for me, cast as I am 'on life's wide plain, friendless.' Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see by his last Elegy (written at Bath), you are near neighbors. *Thursday.*

"I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my sonnet 'To Innocence.' To men whose hearts are not quite deadened by their commerce with the world, innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweetened, though, with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with; yet I choose to retain the word 'lunar'—indulge a 'lunatic' in his loyalty to his mistress the moon! I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burnt for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure), is 'She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven.' A note explains, by 'forger,' her right hand, with which she forged or coined the base metal. For pathos read bathos. You have

put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your 'Religious Musings.' I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you; — it is Izaak Walton's 'Complete Angler.' All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer it in less than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July; though, if you get anyhow *settled* before then, pray let me know it immediately; 'twould give me such satisfaction. Concerning the Unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage, is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for genius. Nothing more occurs just now; so I will leave you, in mercy, one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be, with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travelled through. God love you, Coleridge, and prosper you through life; though mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol, or at Nottingham, or anywhere but London. Our loves to Mrs. C——.

"C. L.

"*Friday*, 10*th June*, 1796."

Coleridge, settled in his melancholy cottage, invited Lamb to visit him. The hope — the expectation —

the disappointment, are depicted in the following letter written in the summer of the eventful year 1796.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"July 1st, 1796.

"The first moment I can come I will; but my hopes of coming yet a while, yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial, as I shall so easily, by your direction, find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bedfellow. She thanks you though, and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines, introductory to your poem on 'Self,' run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your 'Dactyls?' They are what you would call good *per se*, but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked; I mark with figures the lines parodied:—

4. — Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed.
5. — Sad is the measure that hangs a clog round 'em so.
6. — Meagre and languid, proclaiming its wretchedness.
1. — Weary, unsatisfied, not a little sick of 'em.
11. — Cold is my tired heart, I have no charity.
2. — Painfully travelling thus over the rugged road.
7. — O begone, measure, half Latin, half English, then.
12. — Dismal your Dactyls are, God help ye, rhyming ones!

"I possibly may not come this fortnight; therefore, all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately, if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two; but young S——,

of my office, is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time, and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again: had the knave gone sick, and died, and been buried at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort, but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when, in books of criticism, where commonplace quotation is heaped upon quotation, I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher, men with whom succeeding dramatic writers (Otway alone excepted)* can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

"*Thursday.* — Mrs. C—— can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme, but she must take my acknowledgment, at present, in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand, whether I can come or no, damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always

* An exception he certainly would not have made a few years afterwards; for he used to mention two pretty lines in the "Orphan,"

> "Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains,
> With all his fleecy flock at feed beside him,"

as a redeeming passage amidst mere stage trickeries. The great merit which lies in the construction of "Venice Preserved," was not in his line of appreciation; and he thought Thomson's reference to Otway's ladies —

> —— "poor Monimia moans,
> And Belvidera pours her soul in love,"

worth both heroines.

glad of her company, but could dispense with the visitor she brings with her — her younger sister, Fear, a white-livered, lily-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussy, that hangs, like a green girl, at her sister's apron-strings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me, I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess, so I changed them to what you bid me, and left 'em at Perry's.* I think 'em altogether good, and do not see why you were solicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's 'Chronicle,' for your verses on Horne Tooke. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers t'other day, but, I think, unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends meeting was, I suppose, a dinner of condolence.† I am not sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysics. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry? I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any part of your epistles, least of all, an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both these worthy gentlemen are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive, and in better cue to write, so good-bye at present.

* Some "occasional" verses of Coleridge's written to order for the Morning Chronicle.

† This was just after the Westminster Election, in which Mr. Tooke was defeated.

"*Friday Evening.* — That execrable aristocrat and knave R—— has given me an absolute refusal of leave. The *poor man* cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, 'this dread dependence on the low-bred mind?' Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content. Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both. LAMB.

"S—— did return, but there are two or three more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, C——, furnished him with the objections. C. LAMB."

The little copy of verses in which Lamb commemorated and softened his disappointment, bearing date (a most unusual circumstance with Lamb), 5th July, 1796, was enclosed in a letter of the following day, which refers to a scheme Coleridge had formed of settling in London on an invitation to share the Editorship of the "Morning Chronicle." The poem includes a lamentation over a fantastical loss — that of a draught of the Avon "which Shakspeare drank;" somewhat strangely confounding the Avon of Stratford with that of Bristol. It may be doubted whether Shakspeare knew the taste of the waves of one Avon more than of the other, or whether Lamb would not have found more kindred with the world's poet in a glass of sack, than in the water of either stream. Coleridge must have enjoyed the misplaced sentiment of his friend, for he was singularly destitute of sympathy with local associations, which he regarded as interfering with the pure and simple impression of great deeds or thoughts; de-

nied a special interest to the Pass of Thermopylæ; and instead of subscribing to purchase "Shakspeare's House," would scarcely have admitted the peculiar sanctity of the spot which enshrines his ashes.

TO SARA AND HER SAMUEL.

"Was it so hard a thing?—I did but ask
A fleeting holiday. One little week,
Or haply two, had bounded my request.

What, if the jaded steer, who all day long
Had borne the heat and labor of the plough,
When evening came, and her sweet cooling hour,
Should seek to trespass on a neighbor copse,
Where greener herbage waved, or clearer streams
Invited him to slake his burning thirst?
That man were crabbed, who should say him nay;
That man were churlish, who should drive him thence!
A blessing light upon your heads, ye good,
Ye hospitable pair! I may not come,
To catch on Clifden's heights the summer gale;
I may not come, a pilgrim, to the banks
Of Avon, lucid stream, to taste the wave
Which Shakspeare drank, our British Helicon:
Or with mine eye intent on Redcliffe towers,
To muse in tears on that mysterious youth,
Cruelly slighted, who to London walls,
In evil hour, shaped his disastrous course.

Complaint begone; begone, unkind reproof:
Take up, my song, take up a merrier strain,
For yet again, and lo! from Avon's vales
Another 'minstrel' cometh! Youth endear'd,
God and good angels guide thee on thy way,
And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.
"C. L."

The letter accompanying these verses begins cheerfully thus:

"What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington, possibly, you

would not like; to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks; St. George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity to the Bench. Choose! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles, yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the 'Chronicle' must be a very comfortable and secure living for a man. But should not you read French, or do you? and can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis called, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels or could say on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness? White's 'Letters' are near publication; could you review 'em or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the 'Critical Review?' His frontispiece is a good conceit — Sir John learning to dance to please Madam Page, in dress of doublet, &c., from the upper half, and modern pantaloons with shoes, &c., of the eighteenth century, from the lower half; and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, 'all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity' — much superior to Dr. Kenrick's 'Falstaff's Wedding,' which you have seen. A—— sometimes laughs at superstition, and religion, and the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital: White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled and scrupled about it, and at last, to use his own words, 'tampered' with Godwin to know whether the thing was honest or not. Godwin said nay to it, and A—— rejected the living! Could the blindest poor papist have bowed more servilely to his priest or casuist? Why sleep the 'Watchman's' answers to that

Godwin? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep those last lines I sent you. Do that and read these for your pains: —

TO THE POET COWPER.

'Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!
Thine was the sorest malady of all;
And I am sad to think that it should light
Upon the worthy head! But thou art heal'd,
And thou art yet, we trust, the destined man,
Born to reanimate the lyre, whose chords
Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long;
To the immortal sounding of whose strings
Did Milton frame the stately-pacèd verse;
Among whose wires with light finger playing,
Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,
The lady Muses' dearest darling child,
Elicited the deftest tunes yet heard
In hall or bower, taking the delicate ear
Of Sidney and his peerless Maiden Queen.

Thou, then, take up the mighty epic strain,
Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest and the best.
1796.

"I have read your climax of praises in those three Reviews. These mighty spouters out of panegyric waters have, two of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me, and the waters are cooling and refreshing. Prosaically, the Monthly reviewers have made indeed a large article of it, and done you justice. The Critical have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, and notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the 'Religious Musings.' I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks and the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *expressed* above (perhaps scarcely just); but the poor gentleman

has just recovered from his lunacies, and that begets pity, and pity love, and love admiration; and then it goes hard with people but they lie! Have you read the ballad called 'Leonora,' in the second number of the 'Monthly Magazine!' If you have!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Bürger), in the third number, of scarce inferior merit; and (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the fifth number. For your Dactyls — I am sorry you are so sore about 'em — a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is nought. Be not yourself 'half anger, half agony,' if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote in all your life — you have written much.

"Have a care, good Master Poet, of the Statute *de Contumeliâ*. What do you mean by calling Madame Mara, — harlot and naughty things? * The goodness of the verse would not save you in a court of justice. But are you really coming to town? Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, and inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr. Chambers living: this Mr. Chambers, he said, had been the making of a friend's fortune, who wished to make some return for it. He went away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs. Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, and all that survives, of Mr. Chambers; and

* ——— "I detest
These scented rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast
In intricacies of laborious song."
Lines composed in a Concert Room, by S. T. C.

a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, and has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr. Pember (for that was the gentleman's friend's name); he is an attorney, and lives at Bristol. Find him out, and acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, and offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs. Reynolds, if he chooses to make her a present. She is in very distressed circumstances. Mr. Pember, attorney, Bristol. Mr. Chambers lived in the Temple; Mrs. Reynolds, his daughter, was my school-mistress, and is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again. I have not further to add. Our loves to Sara. *Thursday.* C. LAMB."

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS OF LAMB TO COLERIDGE, CHIEFLY RELATING TO THE DEATH OF MRS. LAMB, AND MISS LAMB'S SUBSEQUENT CONDITION.

THE autumn of 1796 found Lamb engaged all the morning in task-work at the India House, and all the evening in attempting to amuse his father by playing cribbage; sometimes snatching a few minutes for his only pleasure, writing to Coleridge; while Miss Lamb was worn down to a state of extreme nervous misery, by attention to needlework by day, and to her mother by night, until the insanity, which had been manifested more than once, broke out into frenzy, which, on Thursday, 22nd of September, proved fatal to her

mother. The following account of the proceedings on the inquest, copied from the "Times" of Monday, 26th September, 1796, supplies the details of this terrible calamity, doubtless with accuracy, except that it would seem, from Lamb's ensuing letter to Coleridge, that *he*, and not the landlord, took the knife from the unconscious hand.

"On Friday afternoon, the coroner and a jury sat on the body of a lady in the neighborhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared, by the evidence adduced, that, while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case-knife lying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room. On the calls of her infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and, with loud shrieks, approached her parent. The child, by her cries, quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late. The dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.

"For a few days prior to this, the family had observed some symptoms of insanity in her, which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening, that her brother, early the next morning, went to Dr. Pitcairn, but that gentleman was not at home.

"It seems the young lady had been once before deranged.

"The jury, of course, brought in their verdict — *Lunacy.*" *

The following is Lamb's account of the event to Coleridge: —

"September 27th, 1796.

"My dearest Friend, — White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines: — My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad-house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses, — I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris, of the Blue-coat School, has been very very kind to us, and we have no other friend; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former

* A statement nearly similar to this will be found in several other journals of the day, and in the "Annual Register" for the year. The "True Briton" adds: — "It appears she had been before, in the earlier part of her life, deranged, from the harassing fatigues of too much business. As her carriage towards her mother had always been affectionate in the extreme, it is believed her increased attachment to her, as her infirmities called for it by day and by night, caused her loss of reason at this time. It has been stated in some of the morning papers that she has an insane brother in confinement; but this is without foundation." None of the accounts give the names of the sufferers: but in the index to the "Annual Register," the anonymous account is referred to with Mrs. Lamb's name.

things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than to feel.

"God Almighty have us all in his keeping.

"C. LAMB.

"Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

"Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us.

"C. LAMB."

After the inquest, Miss Lamb was placed in an Asylum, where she was, in a short time, restored to reason. The following is Lamb's next letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 3rd, 1796.

"My dearest Friend,—Your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear, dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind and impressive (as it must be to the end

of life), but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which, in this early stage, knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and serene; far, very very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind and religious principle, to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm; even on the dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquillity which by-standers may have construed into indifference — a tranquillity not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favorable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On that first evening, my aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying, — my father, with his poor forehead plastered over, from a wound he had received from a daughter dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly, — my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room — yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense, — had endeavored after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the 'ignorant present time,' and *this* kept me up. I had the whole weight

of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me; — this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away? A thought occurred and relieved me, — if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs; I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the very second day, (I date from the day of horrors,) as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room; they prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room! Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest; I was going to partake with them; when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room — the very next room; — a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it

was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

"I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days, and was as a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humoring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards, as though nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr. Norris, of Christ's Hospital, has been as a father to me — Mrs. Norris as a mother; though we had few claims on them. A gentleman, brother to my godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds; and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old lady, a cousin of my father and aunt's, a gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days. My aunt is recovered, and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going — and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my father for her board) wholly and solely to my sister's use. Reckoning this, we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid-servant to look after him, when I am out, which will be necessary, 170*l.* or

180*l.* rather a-year, out of which we can spare 50*l.* or 60*l.* at least for Mary while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good lady of the mad-house, and her daughter, an elegant, sweet-behaved young lady, love her, and are taken with her amazingly; and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much. Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bethlem thought it likely, 'here it may be my fate to end my days,' conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A legacy of 100*l.* which my father will have at Christmas, and this 20*l.* I mentioned before, with what is in the house, will much more than set us clear. If my father, an old servant-maid, and I, can't live, and live comfortably, on 130*l.* or 120*l.* a-year, we ought to burn by slow fires; and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavorable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind, — he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way; and I know his language is already, 'Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to,

&c. &c., and in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good, — but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's moneys in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The lady at this mad-house assures me that I may dismiss immediately both doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally a composing draught or so for a while; and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself, for 50*l.* or guineas a-year — the outside would be 60*l.* — you know, by economy, how much more even I shall be able to spare for her comforts. She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients; and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly; and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world, my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness. I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear, dearest soul, in a future letter, for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and, if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking), she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable. God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind!

C. LAMB."

"These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme, the very opposite to despair. I was in danger of making myself too happy. Your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning. I hope (for Mary I can answer) — but I hope that *I* shall through life never have less recollection, nor a fainter impression, of what has happened than I have now. 'Tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious through life; and by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty!

"Send me word how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was, and will be, an inestimable treasure to me. You have a view of what my situation demands of me, like my own view, and I trust a just one.

"Coleridge, continue to write; but do not forever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both.

"I will write again very soon. Do you write directly."

As Lamb recovered from the shock of his own calamity, he found comfort in gently admonishing his friend on that imbecility of purpose which attended the development of his mighty genius. His next letter, commencing with this office of friendship, soon reverts to the condition of that sufferer, who was endeared to him the more because others shrank from and forsook her.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 17th, 1796.

"My dearest Friend, — I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life, veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you — a stubborn, irresistible concurrence of events — or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again; and your fortunes are an *ignis fatuus* that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock; then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's, whose son's tutor you were likely to be; and, would to God, the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last, in peace and comfort, to the 'life and labors of a cottager.' You see, from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed. I should ill deserve God's blessings, which, since the late terrible event, have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness. Mary continues serene and cheerful. I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me; for, though I see her almost every day, yet we delight to write to one another, for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house. I have not the letter by me, but will quote from memory what she wrote in it: 'I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight, when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my

mother seems to descend and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me. I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better. My grandmother, too, will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, 'Polly, what are those poor crazy moythered brains of yours thinking of always?" Poor Mary! my mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right; never could believe how much *she* loved her; but met her caresses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse. Still she was a good mother. God forbid I should think of her but *most* respectfully, *most* affectionately. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not worthy of one tenth of that affection which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection, that every act of duty and of love she could pay, every kindness (and I speak true, when I say to the hurting of her health, and most probably in great part to the derangement of her senses), through a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could show her, she ever did. I will, some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my sister's excellences; 'twill seem like exaggeration, but I will do it. At present, short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you. God love you. God love us all.

"C. LAMB."

Miss Lamb's gradual restoration to comfort, and her brother's earnest watchfulness over it, are illustrated in the following fragment of a letter: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"October 28th, 1796.

"I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with me in my sister's continued reason, and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her; she is likely to be as comfortably situated in all respects as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest, by way of crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to coöperate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her, — our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read, for reading was her daily bread."

Two months, though passed by Lamb in anxiety and labor, but cheered by Miss Lamb's continued possession of reason, so far restored the tone of his mind, that his interest in the volume which had been contemplated to introduce his first verses to the world, in association with those of his friend, was enkindled anew. While cherishing the hope of reunion with his sister, and pain-

fully wresting his leisure hours from poetry and Coleridge to amuse the dotage of his father, he watched over his own returning sense of enjoyment with a sort of holy jealousy, apprehensive lest he should forget too soon the terrible visitation of Heaven. At this time he thus writes: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"December 2nd, 1796.

"I have delayed writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40, 63, 84? above all, let me protest strongly against your rejecting the 'Complaint of Ninathoma,' 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the 'music of Caril.' If a vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial *too*), the 'Epitaph on an Infant,' of which its author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line wonder, I'll tell you what to do; sell the copyright of it at once to a country statuary; commence in this manner Death's prime poet-laureate; and let your verses be adopted in every village round, instead of those hitherto famous ones: —

'Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain.' *

"I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the

*This epitaph, which, notwithstanding Lamb's gentle banter, occupied an entire page in the book, is curious — "a miracle instead of wit" — for it is a *commonplace* of Coleridge, who, investing ordinary things with a dreamy splendor, or weighing them down with accumulated thought, has rarely if ever written a stanza so smoothly vapid — so de-

'Monthly Magazine:' write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines —

'Laugh all that weep,' &c.

I would willingly sacrifice them; but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that, in honest truth, I can't spare them: as things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page. White's book is at length reviewed in the Monthly; was it your doing, or Dyer's, to whom I sent him? — or, rather, do you not write in the Critical? — for I observed, in an article of this month's, a line quoted out of *that* sonnet on Mrs. Siddons,

'With eager wondering, and perturb'd delight.'

And a line from *that* sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger. That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestly, Burke; — 'twas two Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the Salutation, which is even now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, egg-hot, welsh-rabbits, metaphysics, and poetry. — Are we *never* to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now! I have never met with any one — never shall meet with any one — who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society. I have

void of merit or offence — (unless it be an offence to make *fade* do duty as a verb active) as the following: —

"Ere sin could blight or sorrow *fade*,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven convey'd,
And bade it blossom there."

no one to talk all these matters about to; I lack friends, I lack books to supply their absence: but these complaints ill become me. Let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but two months back — but two months! O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me! Remind me of them; remind me of my duty! Talk seriously with me when you do write! I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your solicitude about my sister. She is quite well, but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because, at present, it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together: secondly, from a regard to the world's good report, for, I fear, tongues will be busy *whenever* that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has pressed it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement; what she hath done to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not: do you? I am starving at the India House, — near seven o'clock without my dinner, and so it has been, and will be, almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint, and then to cards with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace; but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

"I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at cribbage, have got my father's leave to write a while; with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, 'If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all.' The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh. I told you I do not approve of your

omissions, neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements. I have not time to point out a better, and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning, indeed, with the 'Joan of Arc' lines I coincide entirely with. I love a splendid outset — a magnificent portico, — and the diapason is grand. When I read the 'Religious Musings,' I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is — 'Laugh all that weep,' especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception; and I ask what business they have among yours? but friendship covereth a multitude of defects. I want some loppings made in the 'Chatterton;' it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it — or is it too late — or do you think it needs none? Don't reject those verses in one of your 'Watchmen,' 'Dear native brook,' &c.; nor I think those last lines you sent me, in which 'all effortless' is without doubt to be preferred to 'inactive.' If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, 'tis that I am stupefied with a toothache. Hang it! do not omit 48, 52, and 53: what you do retain, though, call sonnets, for heaven's sake, and not effusions. Spite of your ingenious anticipation of ridicule in your preface, the five last lines of 50 are too good to be lost, the rest is not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate — I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and then to this intercourse (the only intercourse I fear we two shall ever have) — this conversation with your

friend — such I boast to be called. God love you and yours! Write me when you move, lest I direct wrong. Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines, 129, are probably too light for the volume where the 'Religious Musings' are, but I remember some very beautiful lines, addressed by somebody at Bristol to somebody in London. God bless you once more. *Thursday night.*

"C. LAMB."

In another letter, about this time (December, 1796), Lamb transmitted to Coleridge two Poems for the volume — one a copy of verses "To a Young Lady going out to India," which were not inserted, and are not worthy of preservation; the other, entitled, "The Tomb of Douglas," which was inserted, and which he chiefly valued as a memorial of his impression of Mrs. Siddons' acting in Lady Randolph. The following passage closes the sheet.

"At length I have done with verse-making; not that I relish other people's poetry less; theirs comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading 'The Task' with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper: I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.' Write to me. God love you and yours. C. L."

The following, of 10th December, 1796, illustrates Lamb's almost wayward admiration of his only friend, and a feeling — how temporary with him! — of vexation with the imperfect sympathies of his elder brother.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when in my highly agitated and perhaps somewhat distorted state of mind, I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses; all my book of extracts from 'Beaumont and Fletcher' and a thousand sources: I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept —

'Noting ere they past away
The little lines of yesterday.'

I almost burned all your letters, — I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers; for much as he dwelt upon your conversation, while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down, — you were the cause of my madness — you and your damned foolish sensibility and melancholy — and he lamented with a true brotherly feeling that we ever met, even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have 'cursed wit and Poetry and Pope.' I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way, for a season, but I have claimed them in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating — they are sacred things with me."

The following long letter, bearing date on the out-

side, 5th January, 1797, is addressed to Mr. Coleridge at Stowey, near Bridgewater, whither he had removed from Bristol, to enjoy the society and protection of his friend Mr. Poole. The original is a curious specimen of clear compressed penmanship; being contained in three sides of a sheet of foolscap.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"*Sunday morning.* — You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot-girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock-and-a-bull story of Joan, the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a wagoner, his wife, and six children. The texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable, too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

'On mightiest deeds to brood
Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart
Throb fast; anon I paused, and in a state
Of half expectance listened to the wind;'

'They wondered at me, who had known me once
A cheerful careless damsel;'

'The eye,
That of the circling throng and of the visible world
Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy;'

I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines —

'For she had lived in this bad world
As in a place of tombs,
And touched not the pollutions of the dead;'

but your 'fierce vivacity' is a faint copy of the 'fierce and terrible benevolence' of Southey; added to this, that it will look like rivalship in you, and extort a comparison with Southey, — I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, considered in themselves as an addition to what you had before written, (strains of a far higher mood,) are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, and walked and talked with him, calling him 'old acquaintance.' Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which was your aim. 'Hailed who might be near' (the 'canvas-coverture moving,' by the by, is laughable); 'a woman and six children' (by the way, — why not nine children? It would have been just half as pathetic again): 'statues of sleep they seemed': 'frost-mangled wretch': 'green putridity': 'hailed him immortal' (rather ludicrous again): 'voiced a sad and simple tale' (abominable!): 'unprovendered': 'such his tale': 'Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered' (a most *insufferable line*): 'amazements of affright': 'the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture' (what shocking confusion of ideas)!

"In these delineations of common and natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigné's tenants, '*much of his native loftiness remained in the execution.*'

"I was reading your 'Religious Musings' the other day, and sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the 'Paradise Lost,' and even that

was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. 'There is one mind,' &c., down to 'Almighty's throne,' are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading.

> 'Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze,
> Views all creation.'

I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoice that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper and Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity.

"In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all, the 'Miniature'—

> 'There were
> Who formed high hopes and flattering ones of thee,
> Young Robert!'
>
> 'Spirit of Spenser! — was the wanderer wrong?'

"Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson, in his 'Life of Waller,' gives a most delicious specimen of him, and adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, 'It may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole.' I endeavored — I wished to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer 'sun-vinegared.' Your 'Dream,' down to that exquisite line —

> 'I can't tell half his adventures,'

is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The re-

mainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, 'He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy.' By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, and in any way you choose, single or double. The India Company is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents — such poor and honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I cannot say I know Colson, at least intimately; I once supped with him and Allen; I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the sublime of poetry and of science. Your proposed 'Hymns' will be a fit preparatory study wherewith 'to discipline your young novitiate soul.' I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dulness.

"*Sunday night.* — You and Sara are very good to think so kindly and so favorably of poor Mary; I would to God all did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her; but our circumstances are peculiar, and we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me good things, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal-hole steps as

you went into the old grammar-school, and open her apron, and bring out her basin, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me; the good old creature is now lying on her death-bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered, I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favorite:

> 'No after friendship e'er can raise
> The endearments of our early days;
> Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when it first began to love.'

"Lloyd has kindly left me, for a keepsake, 'John Woolman.' You have read it, he says, and like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think it could not have escaped you. — 'Small treasure to a resigned mind is sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility, and feel that in us, which breathes out this language — Abba! Father!'—— I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort — but I please myself in the thought, that anything from me will be acceptable to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out; two will be enough — or indeed one — but two better. I have a dim recollection that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a most prolific subject for a long poem; — why not adopt it, Coleridge? — there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the moon for instance.) Or a Five Days' Dream, which shall

illustrate, in sensible imagery, Hartley's five Motives to Conduct: — 1. Sensation; 2. Imagination; 3. Ambition; 4. Sympathy; 5. Theopathy: — *First.* Banquets, music, &c., effeminacy, — and their insufficiency. *Second.* 'Beds of hyacinth and roses, where young Adonis oft reposes;' 'Fortunate Isles;' 'The pagan Elysium,' &c.; poetical pictures; antiquity as pleasing to the fancy; — their emptiness; madness, &c. *Third.* Warriors, Poets; some famous yet, more forgotten; their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent; pride, vanity, &c. *Fourth.* All manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse; love; friendship, relationship, &c. *Fifth.* Hermits; Christ and his apostles; martyrs; heaven, &c. An imagination like yours, from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great ideas, if indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

"*Monday morn.* — 'A London letter — Ninepence half-penny!' Look you, master poet, I have remorse as well as another man, and my bowels can sound upon occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to those former — this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable mode of conveyance. Well may the 'ragged followers of the Nine!' set up for flocci-nauci-what-do-you-call-'em-ists! and I do not wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America, they protest against the admission of those *yellow*-complexioned, *copper*-colored, *white*-livered gentlemen, who never proved themselves their friends! Don't you think your verses on a 'Young Ass' too

trivial a companion for the 'Religious Musings?' — 'scoundrel monarch,' alter that; and the 'Man of Ross' is scarce admissible, as it now stands, curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the 'Chatterton,' which it does but encumber, and it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition: that, in particular, most barefaced, unfounded, impudent assertion, that Mr. Rogers is indebted for his story to Loch Lomond, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce anything is common to them both. The author of the 'Pleasures of Memory' was somewhat hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. He never saw the poem. I long to read your poem on Burns — I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print, now, all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a second volume with Lloyd? Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on his mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be *I* may like 'em, as your taste and mine do not always exactly *identify*. Yours,

"C. LAMB."

Soon after the date of this letter, death released the father from his state of imbecility, and the son from his wearisome duties. With his life, the annuity he had derived from the old bencher he had served so faithfully, ceased; while the aunt continued to linger still with Lamb in his cheerless lodging. His sister

still remained in confinement in the asylum to which she had been consigned on her mother's death — perfectly sensible and calm, — and he was passionately desirous of obtaining her liberty. The surviving members of the family, especially his brother John, who enjoyed a fair income in the South Sea House, opposed her discharge; — and painful doubts were suggested by the authorities of the parish, where the terrible occurrence happened, whether they were not bound to institute proceedings, which must have placed her for life at the disposition of the Crown, especially as no medical assurance could be given against the probable recurrence of dangerous frenzy. But Charles came to her deliverance; he satisfied all the parties who had power to oppose her release, by his solemn engagement that he would take her under his care for life; and he kept his word. Whether any communication with the Home Secretary occurred before her release, I have been unable to ascertain; it was the impression of Mr. Lloyd, from whom my own knowledge of the circum stances, which the letters do not ascertain, was derived, that a communication took place, on which a similar pledge was given; at all events, the result was, that she left the asylum and took up her abode for life with her brother Charles. For her sake, at the same time, he abandoned all thoughts of love and marriage; and with an income of scarcely more than 100*l.* a year, derived from his clerkship, aided for a little while by the old aunt's small annuity, set out on the journey of life at twenty-two years of age, cheerfully, with his beloved companion, endeared to him the more by her strange calamity, and the constant apprehension of a recurrence of the malady which had caused it!

CHAPTER III.

[1797 to 1800.]

LETTERS TO COLERIDGE AND MANNING IN LAMB'S FIRST YEARS OF LIFE WITH HIS SISTER.

THE anxieties of Lamb's new position were assuaged during the spring of 1797, by frequent communications with Coleridge respecting the anticipated volume, and by some additions to his own share in its pages. He was also cheered by the company of Lloyd, who, having resided for a few months with Coleridge, at Stowey, came to London in some perplexity as to his future course. Of this visit Lamb speaks in the following letter, probably written in January. It contains some verses expressive of his delight at Lloyd's visit, which, although afterwards inserted in the volume, are so well fitted to their framework of prose, and so indicative of the feelings of the writer at this crisis of his life, that I may be excused for presenting them with the context.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1797.

"Dear Col, — You have learned by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked-for, are not ill expressed in what follows, and what, if you do not object to them as too personal, and to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth, I should wish

to make a part of our little volume. I shall be sorry if that volume comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very school-boy-ish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addressed you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume; so frequently, so habitually, as you dwell in my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in contact with a poetical mood. But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle — my tenderest remembrances to your beloved Sara, and a smile and a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley. The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials), to the 'Monthly Magazine,' where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognize your poem on Burns.

TO CHARLES LLOYD, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

Alone, obscure, without a friend,
A cheerless, solitary thing,
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?
What offering can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,
That him in aught compensate may
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,
For loves and friendships far away,

In brief oblivion to forego
Friends, such as thine, so justly dear,
And be awhile with me content
To stay, a kindly loiterer, here?

For this a gleam of random joy
Hath flush'd my unaccustom'd cheek:

And, with an o'er-charged bursting heart,
I feel the thanks, I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muse's lays,
And sweet the charm of matin bird—
'Twas long, since these estranged ears
The sweeter voice of friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds
In memory's ear, in after time
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,
And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,
And when the little week is o'er,
To cheerless, friendless solitude
When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart
The grateful sense shall cherish'd be;
I'll think less meanly of myself,
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

"O Coleridge, would to God you were in London with us, or we two at Stowey with you all. Lloyd takes up his abode at the Bull and Mouth Inn; the Cat and Salutation would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes cœnæque Deûm!* Anglice—Welch rabbits, punch, and poesy. Should you be induced to publish those very school-boy-ish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the 'Monthly Magazine;' yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better: but they are too personal, and almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in last 'Monthly Magazine;' they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em. My sister's kind love to you all.

"C. LAMB."

It would seem, from the following fragment of a

letter of 7th April, 1797, that Lamb, at first, took a small lodging for his sister apart from his own — but soon to be for life united.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In one little half year's illness, and in such an illness of such a nature and of such consequences! to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again — this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence."

The next letter to Coleridge begins with a transcript of Lamb's Poem, entitled "A Vision of Repentance," which was inserted in the *Addenda* to the volume, and is preserved among his collected poems, and thus proceeds:

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 15th, 1797.

"The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments. Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry* of Milton in his 'Comus,' and Fletcher in that exquisite thing ycleped the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' where

they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

"By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's 'Godfrey of Bullen,' for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me.

"Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks, afraid, he says, to open it lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very letter of mine was in answer to one, wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his recovery, for surely, Coleridge, an exquisiteness of feeling like this must border on derangement. But I love him more and more, and will not give up the hope of his speedy recovery, as he tells me he is under Dr. Darwin's regimen.*

"God bless us all, and shield us from insanity, which is 'the sorest malady of all.'

"My kind love to your wife and child.

"C. LAMB.

"Pray write now."

As summer advanced, Lamb discerned a hope of compensation for the disappointment of last year, by a visit to Coleridge, and thus expressed his wishes.

* Poor Charles Lloyd! These apprehensions were sadly realized. Delusions of the most melancholy kind thickened over his latter days — yet left his admirable intellect free for the finest processes of severe reasoning. At a time when, like Cowper, he believed himself the especial subject of Divine wrath, he could bear his part in the most subtle disquisition on questions of religion, morals, and poetry, with the nicest accuracy of perception and the most exemplary candor; and, after an argument of hours revert, with a faint smile, to his own despair!

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I discern a possibility of my paying you a visit next week. May I, can I, shall I, come so soon? Have you *room* for me, *leisure* for me, and are you all pretty well? Tell me all this honestly — immediately. And by what *day*-coach could I come soonest and nearest to Stowey? A few months hence may suit you better; certainly me as well. If so, say so. I long, I yearn, with all the longings of a child do I desire to see you, to come among you — to see the young philosopher, to thank Sara for her last year's invitation in person — to read your tragedy — to read over together our little book — to breathe fresh air — to revive in me vivid images of 'Salutation scenery.' There is a sort of sacrilege in my letting such ideas slip out of my mind and memory. Still that R—— remaineth — a thorn in the side of Hope, when she would lean towards Stowey. Here I will leave off, for I dislike to fill up this paper, which involves a question so connected with my heart and soul, with meaner matter or subjects to me less interesting. I can talk, as I can think, nothing else. *Thursday.*

"C. LAMB."

The visit was enjoyed; the book was published; and Lamb was once more left to the daily labors of the India House and the unceasing anxieties of his home. His feelings, on the recurrence of the season, which had, last year, been darkened by his terrible calamity, will be understood from the first of two pieces of blank verse, which fill the two first sheets of a letter to Coleridge, written under an apprehension of some neglect

on the part of his friend, which had its cause in no estrangement of Coleridge's affections, but in the vicissitudes of the imaginative philosopher's fortune and the constancy of his day-dreamings.

WRITTEN A TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE EVENTS.

[*Friday next, Coleridge, is the day on which my mother died.*]

Alas! how am I chang'd! where be the tears,
The sobs, and forc'd suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart
With which I hung o'er my dear mother's corse?
Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
Within; the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my Father's will?
My God and my Redeemer, keep not thou
My heart in brute and sensual thanklessness
Seal'd up, oblivious ever of that dear grace,
And health restor'd to my long-loved friend.
Long lov'd, and worthy known! Thou didst not keep
Her soul in death. O keep not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse — in spiritual death
And darkness — blacker than those feared shadows
O' the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds
With which the world hath pierc'd us thro' and thro'!
Give us new flesh, new birth; Elect of heaven
May we become, in thine election sure
Contain'd, and to one purpose steadfast drawn —
Our souls' salvation.
Thou and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven,
And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
With answering looks of love, her placid smiles
Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.*
Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
Those days of vanity to return again,

* [Note in the margin of MS.] "This is almost literal from a letter of my sister's — less than a year ago."

(Nor fitting me to ask, nor thee to give),
Vain loves, and "wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid:"
(Child of the dust as I am,) who so long
My foolish heart steep'd in idolatry,
And creature-loves. Forgive it, O my Maker!
If in a mood of grief, I sin almost
In sometimes brooding on the days long past,
(And from the grave of time wishing them back,)
Days of a mother's fondness to her child —
Her little one! Oh, where be now those sports
And infant play-games? Where the joyous troops
Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
O my companions! O ye loved names
Of friend, or playmate dear, gone are ye now.
Gone divers ways; to honor and credit some;
And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame? *
I only am left, with unavailing grief
One parent dead to mourn, and see one live
Of all life's joys bereft, and desolate:
Am left, with a few friends, and one above
The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
Contented as I may, to bear me on,
T' the not unpeaceful evening of a day
Made black by morning storms.

"The following I wrote when I had returned from C. Lloyd, leaving him behind at Burton, with Southey. To understand some of it, you must remember that at that time he was very much perplexed in mind.

A stranger, and alone, I past those scenes
We past so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, as I look'd
Around me, and the pleasant voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more, to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd —
All he had been to me! And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure;
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man;

* [Note in the margin of MS.] "Alluding to some of my old play fellows being, literally, 'on the town,' and some otherwise wretched."

> And I may sometimes join its idiot laugh:
> Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
> Omniscient Father, as thou judgest best,
> And in *thy* season soften thou my heart.
> I pray not for myself: I pray for him
> Whose soul is sore perplexed. Shine thou on him,
> Father of lights! and in the difficult paths
> Make plain his way before him: his own thoughts
> May he not think — his own ends not pursue —
> So shall he best perform thy will on earth.
> Greatest and Best, Thy will be ever ours!

"The former of these poems I wrote with unusual celerity t'other morning at office. I expect you to like it better than anything of mine; Lloyd does, and I do myself.

"You use Lloyd very ill, never writing to him. I tell you again that his is not a mind with which you should play tricks. He deserves more tenderness from you.

"For myself, I must spoil a little passage of 'Beaumont and Fletcher' to adapt it to my feelings: —

> 'I am prouder
> That I was once your friend, tho' now forgot,
> Than to have had another true to me.'

If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry, and call you hard names — Manchineel and I don't know what else. I wish you would send me my great-coat. The snow and the rain season is at hand, and I have but a wretched old coat, once my father's, to keep 'em off, and that is transitory.

> 'When time drives flocks from field to fold,
> When ways grow foul and blood gets cold,'

I shall remember where I left my coat. Meet emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect — cold, cold, cold!

C. LAMB."

The following lines, which Lamb transmitted to his new friend Southey, bespeak the remarkable serenity with which, when the first shock was over and the duties of life-long love arranged, Lamb was able to contemplate the victim of his sister's frenzy.*

Thou should'st have longer lived, and to the grave
Have peacefully gone down in full old age;
Thy children would have tended thy gray hairs.
We might have sat, as we have often done,
By our fire-side, and talk'd whole nights away,
Old time, old friends, and old events recalling,
With many a circumstance of trivial note,
To memory dear, and of importance grown.
How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear!

A wayward son oft-times was I to thee;
And yet, in all our little bickerings,
Domestic jars, there was I know not what
Of tender feeling that were ill exchang'd
For this world's chilling friendships, and their smiles
Familiar, whom the heart calls strangers still.

A heavy lot hath he, most wretched man,
Who lives the last of all his family!
He looks around him, and his eye discerns
The face of the stranger; and his heart is sick.
Man of the world, what can'st thou do for him?
Wealth is a burden which he could not bear;
Mirth a strange crime, the which he dares not act;
And generous wines no cordial to his soul.
For wounds like his, Christ is the only cure.
Go! preach thou to him of a world to come,
Where friends shall meet and know each other's face!
Say less than this, and say it to the winds.

* These lines are now first introduced in this Edition — becoming known to the Editor by their publication in the first volume of "Southey's Life and Correspondence," p. 325, where they appear in a letter from Southey to Mr. Wynn. The Biographer courteously adds, that they would have been sent to the Editor, but that they were not observed till after the publication of the First Edition of these Memorials.

An addition to Lamb's household cares is thus mentioned in a letter

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"December 10th, 1797.

"In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, and at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is 'indolent and mulish,' I quote her own words, and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The lady, with delicate irony, remarks, that if I am not an hypocrite, I shall rejoice to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us, while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own 'ease and tranquillity,' to keep her any longer; and, in fine, summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoice to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitened we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expense may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities, I am somewhat nonplussed, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you though from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth."

In 1798, Coleridge seemed to attain a settled home

by accepting an invitation to become the minister of a Unitarian congregation at Shrewsbury; a hope of short duration. The following letter was addressed by Lamb to him at this time as "S. T. Coleridge" — as if the Mr. were dropped and the "Reverend" not quite adopted — "at the Reverend A. Rowe's, Shrewsbury, Shropshire." The tables are turned here; — Lamb, instead of accusing Coleridge of neglect, takes the charge to himself, in deep humility of spirit, and regards the effect of Miss Lamb's renewed illnesses on his mind as inducing indifference, with an affecting self-jealousy.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"January 28th, 1798.

"You have writ me many kind letters, and I have answered none of them. I don't deserve your attentions. An unnatural indifference has been creeping on me since my last misfortunes, or I should have seized the first opening of a correspondence with *you*. To you, I owe much, under God. In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere.

"These last afflictions, Coleridge, have failed to soften and bend my will. They found me unprepared. My former calamities produced in me a spirit of humil-

ity and a spirit of prayer. I thought they had sufficiently disciplined me; but the event ought to humble me; if God's judgments now fail to take away from me the heart of stone, what more grievous trials ought I not to expect? I have been very querulous, impatient under the rod — full of little jealousies and heart-burnings. — I had wellnigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd — and for no other reason, I believe, than that the good creature did all he could to make me happy. The truth is, I thought he tried to force my mind from its natural and proper bent; he continually wished me to be from home, he was drawing me *from* the consideration of my poor dear Mary's situation, rather than assisting me to gain a proper view of it with religious consolations. I wanted to be left to the tendency of my own mind, in a solitary state, which, in times past, I knew had led to quietness and a patient bearing of the yoke. He was hurt that I was not more constantly with him, but he was living with White, a man to whom I had never been accustomed to impart my *dearest feelings*, tho' from long habits of friendliness, and many a social and good quality, I loved him very much. I met company there sometimes — indiscriminate company. Any society almost, when I am in affliction, is sorely painful to me. I seem to breathe more freely, to think more collectedly, to feel more properly and calmly, when alone. All these things the good creature did with the kindest intentions in the world, but they produced in me nothing but soreness and discontent. I became, as he complained, 'jaundiced' towards him . . . but he has forgiven me — and his smile, I hope, will draw all such humors from me. I am recovering, God be praised for it, a healthiness of

mind, something like calmness — but I want more religion — I am jealous of human helps and leaning-places. I rejoice in your good fortunes. May God at the last settle you! — You have had many and painful trials; humanly speaking they are going to end; but we should rather pray that discipline may attend us thro' the whole of our lives. . . . . A careless and a dissolute spirit has advanced upon *me* with large strides — pray God that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me! Mary is recovering; but I see no opening yet of a situation for her; your invitation went to my very heart, but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness. I think, you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice; she must be with duller fancies and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description, who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other. In answer to your suggestions of occupation for me, I must say that I do not think my capacity altogether suited for disquisitions of that kind. . . . . I have read little, I have a very weak memory, and retain little of what I read; am unused to compositions in which any methodizing is required; but I thank you sincerely for the hint, and shall receive it as far as I am able, that is, endeavor to engage my mind in some constant and innocent pursuit. I know my capacities better than you do.

"Accept my kindest love, and believe me yours, as ever. C. L."

At this time, the only literary man whom Lamb

knew in London was George Dyer, who had been noted as an accomplished scholar, in Lamb's early childhood, at Christ's Hospital. For him Lamb cherished all the esteem that his guileless simplicity of character and gentleness of nature could inspire; in these qualities the friends were akin; but no two men could be more opposite than they were to each other, in intellectual qualifications and tastes — Lamb, in all things original, and rejoicing in the quaint, the strange, the extravagant; Dyer, the quintessence of learned commonplace; Lamb wildly catching the most evanescent spirit of wit and poetry; Dyer, the wondering disciple of their established forms. Dyer officiated as a revering High Priest at the Altar of the Muses — such as they were in the staid, antiquated trim of the closing years of the eighteenth century, before they formed sentimental attachments in Germany, or flirted with revolutionary France, or renewed their youth by drinking the Spirit of the Lakes. Lamb esteemed and loved him so well, that he felt himself entitled to make sport with his peculiarities; but it was as Fielding might sport with his own idea of Parson Adams; or Goldsmith with his Dr. Primrose. The following passage occurs in a letter of 28th November, 1798, addressed —

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I showed my 'Witch,' and 'Dying Lover,' to Dyer last night, but George could not comprehend how that could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessors had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the

Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine, by correcting a proof sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that 'observing the laws of verse.' George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention, or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth, 'Dark are the poet's eyes.' I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark, and many a living bard's besides, and recommended 'Clos'd are the poet's eyes.' But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendor of his genius; and I acquiesced."

The following passage on the same subject occurs in a letter about the same time, addressed

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that George Dyer hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of poetry and criticism. They impend over the town and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry, except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth forever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill.*) He has tried his *vein* in every

species besides — the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply forever, that the Pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope — that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius — that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns) — that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O George, George! with a head uniformly wrong, and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes: then would I call the gentry of thy native island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy prospectus-trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy list of subscribers! I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Harlicarnassus aptly call 'the affected.'"

Lamb's apprehensions of the recurrence of his sister's malady were soon realized. An old maid-servant who assisted her in the lodging became ill; Miss Lamb incessantly watched the death-bed; and just as the poor creature died, was again seized with madness. Lamb placed her under medical care; and, left alone, wrote the following short and miserable letter: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"May 12th, 1800.

"My dear Coleridge, — I don't know why I write, except from the propensity misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness; Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat, to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again, but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. Excuse my troubling you, but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change and the stillness. But I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead. — God bless you. Love to Sara and Hartley. — *Monday*.

"C. LAMB."

The prospect of obtaining a residence more suited to the peculiar exigencies of his situation than that which he then occupied at Pentonville, gave Lamb comfort, which he expressed in the following short letter: -

TO MR. MANNING.

"1800.

"Dear Manning, — I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

"I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at midsummer, by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and a neighborhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently; only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure. — Farewell.

"C. Lamb."

This hope was accomplished, as appears from the following letter: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"1800.

"Dear Coleridge, — Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch (you must remember him, at Christ's, — you saw him, slightly, one day with Thomson at our house) — to come and lodge with him, at his house in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. This was a very comfortable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable rent, and including the use of an old servant, besides being infinitely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you must perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the perpetual liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, probably to the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very generous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (including servant) under 34*l.* a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama. . . . . I have passed two days at Oxford, on a visit which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of the Bodleian Library, and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop Taylor, at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. She never goes anywhere. I do not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you are better by this time; and I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley.

"I expected before this to have had tidings of another little philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favoring the world.

"Have you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains his life — very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and *medical* discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? Alas, *ne sutor ultra crepidam!*

"I hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is gone to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I passed much time with him, and he has showed me particular attention: N. B. A thing I much like. Your books are all safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch away your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's, the bookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will take as much care of them as myself — and you can send for them immediately from him.

"I wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grassmere about Christabel, and comply with my request contained therein.

"Love to all friends round Skiddaw.

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER IV.

[1800 to 1805.]

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS TO MANNING, COLERIDGE, AND WORDSWORTH.

It would seem from the letters of 1800, that the natural determination of Lamb "to take what pleasure he could between the acts of his distressful drama," had led him into a wider circle of companionship, and had prompted sallies of wilder and broader mirth, which afterwards softened into delicacy, retaining all its whim. The following passage, which concludes a letter to Manning, else occupied with merely personal details, proves that his apprehensions for the diminution of his reverence for sacred things were not wholly unfounded; while, amidst its grotesque expressions, may be discerned the repugnance to the philosophical infidelity of some of his companions he retained through life. The passage may, perhaps, be regarded as a sort of desperate compromise between a wild gayety and religious impressions obscured but not effaced; and intimating his disapprobation of infidelity, with a melancholy sense of his own unworthiness seriously to express it.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right hand, and the goats

the left. Stripped of its allegory, you must know, the sheep are *I*, and the Apostles and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c. &c.; the goats are the Atheists and the Adulterers, and dumb dogs, and Godwin and M . . . . . g, and that Thyestæan crew — yaw! how my saintship sickens at the idea!

"You shall have my play and the Falstaff letters in a day or two. I will write to Lloyd by this day's post.

"God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling* — and believe me seriously and deeply your well-wisher and friend, C. LAMB."

In the following letter Lamb's fantastic spirits find scope freely, though in all kindness, in the peculiarities of the learned and good George Dyer: —

TO MR. MANNING.

"August 22nd, 1800.

"Dear Manning, — You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze), discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose. For you must know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials, which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread sauce), each to each, giving

double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful gold-foils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

"George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. A——, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth; where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbors to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance; he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's Æneid, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return post-chaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. 'There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir, but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!' This fine genius, without anything to show for it, or any title beyond George's courtesy, without

even a name; and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra — the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

"Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds (the rightful aborigines of his brain) — Gray, Akenside, and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

"God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot!

"All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

"Avaunt friendship, and all memory of absent friends! C. LAMB."

In the following letter, the exciting subjects of Dr. A—— and Dyer are further played on: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"August 26th, 1800.

"George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with; the oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the

hero. I could hit him off to a hair.* George brought a Dr. A—— to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with packthread, and boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an epic poem by one Wilkie, called the 'Epigoniad,' in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the characters, incidents, &c., verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem, immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 8,000 lines, and *he* not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius); but it was a good while ago; and he has dipped into Rowe and Otway, I suppose having found their names in 'Johnson's Lives' at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seemed even to have heard

* This passage, thus far, is printed in the former volumes; the remainder was then suppressed (with other passages *now* for the first time published) relating to Mr. Dyer, lest they should give pain to that excellent person then living.

of Fletcher, Ford, Marlowe, Massinger, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his 'Parallel' in the winter. I find he is also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle and some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching* so *deeply* upon poetry, can I forget that I have just received from D—— a magnificent copy of his Guinea Epic. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, and fainted. Mr. D——'s genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his 'Good morrow to ye; good master Lieutenant.' Instead of *a* man, *a* woman, *a* daughter, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the* king, *the* hero, he constantly writes, he the king, he the hero; two flowers of rhetoric, palpably from the 'Joan.' But Mr. D—— soars a higher pitch: and when he *is* original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters — Good Heaven! what a brain he must have. He puts as many plums in his pudding as my grandmother used to do; — and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into light, and treading on pure flats of this earth — for twenty-three Books together! C. L."

The following letter, obviously written about the same time, pursues the same theme. There is some

iteration in it; but even *that* is curious enough to prevent the excision of the reproduced passages: —

TO MR. MANNING.

'1800.

"Dear Manning, — I am going to ask a favor of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose, I have been looking into 'Pliny's Letters,' who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things; have you a copy of your 'Algebra' to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts, ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man, and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough, I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of the BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend* (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely *in rerum naturæ*, and smacking too

* Mr. Frend, many years the Actuary of the Rock Insurance Office, in early life the champion of Unitarianism at Cambridge; the object of a great University's displeasure; in short, the "village Hampden" of the lay

much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going, has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing 'Manning's Algebra,' which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and ——'s brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . . Now if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn, — his safest address, — 'Manning's Algebra,' with a neat manuscription in the blank leaf, running thus, 'FROM THE AUTHOR!' it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N. B. — Dirty backs, smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N. B. — He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus — to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern

genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols. — reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme — epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto — all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection — he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.) So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him instead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

"By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it? — but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

"N. B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L."

The "Algebra" arrived; and Lamb wrote the fol-

lowing invitation, in hope to bring the author and the presentee together.

TO MR. MANNING.

"1800.

"George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcass on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's — thou with thy Black Backs, and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters, Shenstone, or the like: it would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his* — Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples, and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded pia mater; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night — he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. A——, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor

wanted to see *me;* for I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his 'Agricultural Magazine.' The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called the 'Epigoniad' by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive, seemingly, to what was going on — hatching of negative quantities — when, suddenly, the name of his old friend, Homer, stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's works. 'It was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it; and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic — and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 8,000 lines!' I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure. Pray come on Monday, if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision.* Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed, I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done

to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode."

Manning could not come; and Dyer's subsequent symptoms are described in the following letter: —

TO MR. MANNING.

"December 27th, 1800.

"At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the Heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

"They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window, or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof-sheet, and catched up a laundress's bill instead — made a dart at 'Bloomfield's Poems' and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately — the most unlucky accident

— he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged; there were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning; the Preface must be expunged, although it cost him 30*l.*, the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian — and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence; — 'Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled!*'

"I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world. *Now*, as Joseph D——, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

> 'How steep! how painful the ascent;
> It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
> To know that ever I shall gain the top.'

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very *popular* poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoiea are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has

engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and waylay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims —

> '*Twelve*, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!'

D—— read two or three acts out to us, very gravely on both sides till he came to this heroic touch, — and then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases."

The following letter, written sometime in 1801, shows that Lamb had succeeded in obtaining occasional employment as a writer of epigrams for newspapers, by which he added something to his slender income. The disparaging reference to Sir James Mackintosh must not be taken as expressive of Lamb's deliberate opinion of that distinguished person. Mackintosh, at this time, was in great disfavor, for his supposed apostasy from the principles of his youth, with Lamb's philosophic friends, whose minds were of temperament less capable than that of the author of the '*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*,' of being diverted from abstract theories of liberty by the crimes and sufferings which then attended the great attempt to reduce them to practice. Lamb, through life, utterly indifferent to politics, was always ready to take part with his friends, and probably scouted, with them, Mackintosh as a deserter.

TO MR. MANNING.

"1801.

"Dear Manning, — I have forborne writing so long (and so have you for the matter of that), until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect — from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you, I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson; any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in Saint Mark. For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor 'Albion' died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up forever.

"All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

"I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism — they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months' interruption.

"I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*-man — who has got a place at last — one of the last I *did* for the 'Albion': —

'Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;

When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,
He went away, and wisely hang'd himself:
This thou may do at last, yet much I doubt,
If thou hast any *Bowels* to gush out! '

"Yours, as ever, C. LAMB."

Some sportive extravagance which, however inconsistent with Lamb's early sentiments of reverent piety, was very far from indicating an irreligious purpose, seems to have given offence to Mr. Walter Wilson, and to have induced the following letter, illustrative of the writer's feelings at this time, on the most momentous of all subjects: —

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"August 14th, 1801.

"Dear Wilson, — I am extremely sorry that any serious difference should subsist between us, on account of some foolish behavior of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before, that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

"I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity, in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings — do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of serious-

ness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company, or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess: my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

"Believe me, very affectionately, yours,

"C. LAMB."

In 1803 Coleridge visited London, and at his departure left the superintendence of a new edition of his poems to Lamb. The following letter, written in reply to one of Coleridge's, giving a mournful account of his journey to the north with an old man and his influenza, refers to a splendid smoking-cap which Coleridge had worn at their evening meetings: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 18th, 1803.

"My dear Coleridge, — Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health too has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off cayenned eggs and such bolsters to discomfort. There

was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire; for you said they had that property. How the old gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clapt his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of heaven that burnt him, how pious it would have made him; him, I mean, that brought the influenza with him, and only took places for one — an old sinner; he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy sideboard again.

"What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average*, *noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it.

"Morning is a girl, and can't smoke — she's no evidence one way or other; and Night is so evidently *bought over*, that he can't be a very upright judge. Maybe the truth is, that *one* pipe is wholesome; *two* pipes toothsome; *three* pipes noisome; *four* pipes fulsome; *five* pipes quarrelsome, and that's the *sum* on't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good, mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless those who take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

"Bless you, old sophist, who next to human nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing! And bless your Montero cap, and your trail (which shall come after you whenever you appoint), and your wife and children — Pipos especially.

"When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening, but a pipe, and some generous Port, and King Lear (being alone), had their effects as solacers. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear. C. L."

The next letter is prefaced by happy news.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Mary sends love from home.

"1803.

"Dear C., — I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to have done; but you know how the human free-will is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste; too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to him; so I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication, (which must march first,) and which I have transplanted from before the Preface, (which stood like a dead wall of prose between,) to be the first poem — then comes 'The Pixies,' and the things most juvenile — then on 'To Chatterton,' &c. — on, lastly, to the 'Ode on the Departing Year,' and 'Musings,' — which finish.

Longman wanted the Ode first, but the arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the Dedication, following the order of time. I told Longman I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced several sonnets, &c. — but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of 'The Thimble,' and that of 'Flicker and Flicker's Wife,' and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatized — and 'The Man of Ross,' — I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir, 'Kisses.' It stands in your first volume, as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing The Kiss to that of 'One Kiss, dear Maid,' &c., I have ventured to entitle it 'To Sara.' I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called 'Kisses' would have been absolutely ludicrous, and 'Effusion' is no name, and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you; but it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself, in some sort, accessary to the selection, which I am to proof-correct; but I decidedly said to Biggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off, I can swear to *individually*, (except the 'Man of Ross,' which is too

familiar in Pope,) but no others — you have your cue. For my part, I had rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept— *memoriæ causâ*.

"Robert Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father; — see how different from Charles he views the old man! (*Literatim.*) 'My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigor of a young man, Italian. He is, really, a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of disordering life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him.' By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite. 'Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman road. It would distract him to mention anything that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, and now rests as the formal precisian of non-existence.' Here is genius, I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write —

"I am in post-haste, C. LAMB."

"Love, &c., to Sara, P. and H."

The next letter, containing a further account of Lamb's superintendence of the new edition, bears the date of Saturday, 27th May, 1803.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear Coleridge, — The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain this lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green Islands of the Blest — voyages in time of war are very precarious — or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit), and with it 'Condillac,' and all other books of yours which were left here. These will set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal wagon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry. I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to *him*, enforcing a speedy mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature, to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beëlzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and thence circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn Hill, up Snow do., on to Wood Street, &c.? The for-

mer mode seems a sad superstitious subdivision of labor. Well! the 'Man of Ross' is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand, and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a Salutation poem, and has the mark of the beast 'Tobacco' upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again (as in first edition), like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the 'Man of Ross' is too familiar, to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it, and it now stands simply as 'Reflections at an Inn about a known Character,' and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

'If 'neath this roof thy *wine-cheer'd* moments pass,'

for

'Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass.'

'Cheer'd' is a sad general word, '*wine-cheer'd*' I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking-trumpet to sound to you 300 miles. But I am your *factotum*, and that save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you, shall be next to a *fac-nihil*—at most, a *fac-simile*. I have ordered 'Imitation of Spenser' to

be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be 'Flicker and Flicker's Wife,' 'The Thimble,' 'Breathe, *dear harmonist*,' and *I believe*, 'The Child that was fed with Manna.' Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian and Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put 'Christabel' therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, 'Ancient Mariners,' &c.

"C. LAMB."

The following is the fragment of a letter (part being lost), on the reappearance of the Lyrical Ballads, in two volumes, and addressed

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Thanks for your letter and present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are, 'The Song of Lucy;' *Simon's sickly daughter*, in 'The Sexton' made me *cry*. Next to these are the description of the continuous echoes in the story of 'Joanna's Laugh,' where the mountains, and all the scenery absolutely seem alive; and that fine Shakspearian character of the 'happy man,' in the 'Brothers,'

> ——— 'that creeps about the fields,
> Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
> Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
> Into his face, until the setting sun
> Write Fool upon his forehead!'

I will mention one more — the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the 'Cumberland Beggar,' that

he may have about him the melody of birds, altho' he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish. The 'Poet's Epitaph' is disfigured, to my taste, by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of 'pin-point' in the sixth stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the 'Beggar,' that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, 'I will teach you how to think upon this subject.' This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne, and many many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign-post up to show where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid; very different from 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Roderick Random,' and other beautiful, bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between author and reader; 'I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it.' Modern novels, 'St. Leons' and the like, are full of such flowers as these — 'Let not my reader suppose,' 'Imagine, if you can, modest!' &c. I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation. . . . . I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his 'Ancient Marinere' 'a Poet's Reverie;' it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical

representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title but one subversive of all credit — which this tale should force upon us, — of its truth?

For me, I was never so affected with any human tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days. I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery, dragged me along like Tom Pipes's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the 'Marinere' should have had a character and profession. This is a beauty in 'Gulliver's Travels,' where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the 'Ancient Marinere' undergoes such trials as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was — like the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is, that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is, I think as well, a little unfounded: the 'Marinere,' from being conversant in supernatural events, *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase*, eye, appearance, &c., which frighten the 'wedding-guest.' You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see.

"To sum up a general opinion of the second volume, I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the 'Ancient Marinere,' the 'Mad Mother,' and the 'Lines at Tintern Abbey' in the first."

The following letter was addressed, on 28th September, 1805, when Lamb was bidding his generous farewell to Tobacco, to Wordsworth, then living in noble poverty with his sister in a cottage by Grasmere, which

is as sacred to some of his old admirers as even Shakspeare's House.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"My dear Wordsworth (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right), I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy (or I believe the true state of the case, so diffident), that it must revert to me as usual; though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them; and that, and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy), often deters her, where no other reason does.*

"We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am; so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us, not unaptly, Gumboil and Toothache, for they used to say that a gumboil is a great relief to a toothache.

"We have been two tiny excursions this summer for three or four days each, to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is; and that is the total history of our rustications this year. Alas! how poor a round to Skiddaw and Helvellyn, and Borrowdale, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802. Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that 'last infirmity of noble minds,' and her cow. Fate need not have set

* This is mere banter; Miss Lamb wrote a very good hand.

her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her; and in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner.

"I hope, by 'southwards,' you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favorite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too; our kindest separate remembrances to him. As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job, and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce, but hitherto all schemes have gone off; an idle brag or two of an evening, vaporing out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my 'sweet enemy,' Tobacco, as you will see in my next page,* I shall perhaps set nobly to work. Hang work!

"I wish that all the year were holiday; I am sure that indolence — indefeasible indolence — is the true state of man, and business the invention of the old Teazer, whose interference doomed Adam to an apron and set him a-hoeing. Pen and ink, and clerks and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer some thousand years after, under pretence of 'Commerce allying distant shores, Promoting and diffusing knowledge, good,' &c. &c. Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

* The "Farewell to Tobacco" was transcribed on the next page; but the actual sacrifice was not completed till some years after.

CHAPTER V.

[1805 to 1810.]

LETTERS TO HAZLITT, ETC.

ABOUT the year 1805 Lamb was introduced to one, whose society through life was one of his chief pleasures — the great critic and thinker, William Hazlitt — who, at that time, scarcely conscious of his own literary powers, was striving hard to become a painter. At the period of the following letter (which is dated 15th March, 1806) Hazlitt was residing with his father, an Unitarian minister, at Wem.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Dear H. — I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I book'd off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorized any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking

after. What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2*s.* 6*d.* Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week, I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month, and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Welbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than 10,000*l.* (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid); one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colors short of *bonâ fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colorman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music-piece by Titian — a thousand-pound picture — five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing; none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed; all leaning separate ways, but so easy, like a flock of some divine shepherd; the coloring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious — as good as Shakspeare's 'Twelfth Night,' — *almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgety passions for a week after — more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no

room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room — his study (only that and the library are shown), when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth 60,000*l.* What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads!

"Yours, my dear painter,

"C. LAMB."

Hazlitt married Miss Sarah Stoddart, sister of the present Sir John Stoddart, who became very intimate with Lamb and his sister. To her, Lamb, on the 11th December, 1806, thus communicated the failure of "Mr. H."

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c.

"God bless you.

"Dear Sarah, — Mary is a little cut at the ill success of 'Mr. H.' which came out last night, and *failed.* I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

"Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of 'Mr. H.' for fear of ill-luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you

mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

"God bless you, dear Sarah,

"Yours, most truly, C. L.

"Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write."

The following is Lamb's account of the same calamity, addressed

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Mary's love to all of you — I wouldn't let her write.

"Dear Wordsworth, — 'Mr. H.' came out last night, and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *letter*. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard! — a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted, and set no great store by; and 'Mr. H.'!! The quantity of friends we had in the house — my brother and I being in public offices, &c., — was astonishing, but they yielded at last to a few hisses.

"A hundred hisses! Hang the word, I write it like kisses — how different!) — a hundred hisses outweigh

a thousand claps. The former come more directly from the heart. Well, 'tis withdrawn, and there is an end.

" Better luck to us, C. LAMB.

[*Turn over.*]

" P. S. Pray, when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Christmas, as I shall have but a day or two, and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well."

About this time Miss Lamb sought to contribute to her brother's scanty income by presenting the plots of some of Shakspeare's plays in prose, with the spirit of the poet's genius interfused, and many of his happiest expressions preserved, in which good work Lamb assisted her; though he always insisted, as he did in reference to " Mrs. Leicester's School," that her portions were the best. The following letter refers to some of those aids, and gives a pleasant instance of that shyness in Hazlitt, which he never quite overcame, and which afforded a striking contrast to the boldness of his published thoughts.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

" 1806.

" Mary is just stuck fast in ' All's Well that Ends Well.' She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boys' clothes. She begins to think Shakspeare must have wanted — Imagination. I, to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well

such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast, and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this, it will be necessary to leave off tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. W. Hazlitt is in town. I took him to see a very pretty girl, professedly, where there were two young girls — the very head and sum of the girlery was two young girls — they neither laughed, nor sneered, nor giggled, nor whispered — but they were young girls — and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty, till he tore me away before supper, in perfect misery, and owned he could not bear young girls; they drove him mad. So I took him home to my old nurse, where he recovered perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an author, I take it, is never to pay anything. But *non cuivis contigit adire Corinthum*. The managers, I thank my stars, have settled that question for me.

"Yours truly, C. LAMB."

Hazlitt, coming to reside in town, became a frequent guest of Lamb's, and a brilliant ornament of the parties which Lamb now began to collect on Wednesday evenings. He seems, in the beginning of 1808, to have sought solitude in a little inn on Salisbury Plain, to which he became deeply attached, and which he has associated with some of his profoundest meditations; and some fantastic letter, in the nature of a

hoax, having puzzled his father, who expected him at Wem, caused some inquiries of Lamb respecting the painter's retreat, to which he thus replied in a letter to

THE REV. MR. HAZLITT.

"Temple, 18th February, 1808.

"Sir, — I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward some linen to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Wilts (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both painter and author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination.

"And some words at the back of the said cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety.

"But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

"The letter to the people where William lodges

says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

"My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

"I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"C. LAMB."

Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt afterwards took up their temporary abode at Winterslow, to which place Miss Lamb addressed the following letter, containing interesting details of her own and her brother's life, and illustrating her own gentle character:—

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"December 10th, 1808.

"My dear Sarah,—I hear of you from your brother, but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. I hope, as you say nothing about your fall to your brother, you are perfectly recovered from the effects of it.

"You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening—all the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him; Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

"The worst miss of all to me is, that when we are in the dismals there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man, but he was a more

useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms. The Sheffington is quite out now, my brother having got merry with claret and Tom Sheridan. This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret, and therefore I tell it to nobody but you and Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton, there came an invitation and proposal from T. S., that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So in the Christmas holidays my brother, and his two great associates, we expect will be all three damned together; that is, I mean if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted.

"I left this unfinished yesterday, in the hope that my brother would have done it for me. His reason for refusing me was 'no exquisite reason,' for it was because he must write a letter to Manning in three or four weeks, and therefore 'he could not be always writing letters,' he said. I wanted him to tell your husband about a great work which Godwin is going to publish to enlighten the world once more, and I shall not be able to make out what it is. He (Godwin) took his usual walk one evening, a fortnight since, to the end of Hatton Garden and back again. During that walk a thought came into his mind, which he instantly sate down and improved upon till he brought it, in seven or eight days, into the compass of a reasonable sized pamphlet.

"To propose a subscription to all well-disposed people to raise a certain sum of money, to be expended in the care of a cheap monument for the former and

the future great dead men; the monument to be a white cross, with a wooden slab at the end, telling their names and qualifications. This wooden slab and white cross to be perpetuated to the end of time; survive the fall of empires, and the destruction o. cities, by means of a map, which, in case of an insurrection among the people, or any other cause by which a city or country may be destroyed, was to be carefully preserved; and then, when things got again into their usual order, the white-cross-wooden-slab-makers were to go to work again and set the wooden slabs in their former places. This, as nearly as I can tell you, is the sum and substance of it; but it is written remarkably well — in his very best manner — for the proposal (which seems to me very like throwing salt on a sparrow's tail to catch him) occupies but half a page, which is followed by very fine writing on the benefits he conjectures would follow if it were done; very excellent thoughts on death, and our feelings concerning dead friends, and the advantages an old country has over a new one, even in the slender memorials we have of great men who once flourished.

"Charles is come home and wants his dinner, and so the dead men must be no more thought of. Tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings. Knowles has not yet got back again, but he is in better spirits. John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday. Our love to Hazlitt.

"Yours, affectionately, M. Lamb."

"*Saturday.*"

To this letter Charles added the following postscript: —

"There came this morning a printed prospectus from 'S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere,' of a weekly paper, to be called 'The Friend;' a flaming prospectus. I have no time to give the heads of it. To commence first Saturday in January. There came also notice of a turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy. C. LAMB."

During the next year Lamb and his sister produced their charming little book of "Poetry for Children," and removed from Mitre Court to those rooms in Inner Temple Lane, — most dear of all their abodes to the memory of their ancient friends — where first I knew them. The change produced its natural and sad effect on Miss Lamb, during whose absence Lamb addressed the following various letter

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"June 7th, 1809.

"Dear Coleridge, — I congratulate you on the appearance of 'The Friend.' Your first number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the Annual, am I not? The 'Monthly Review' sneers at me, and asks 'if Comus is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?' because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except 'Samson Agonistes;' so because they do not know, or won't remember, that Comus was written long before,

I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton. O, Coleridge! do kill those reviews, or they will kill us; kill all we like! Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself; but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for 30*l.* a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following, Mary was taken ill with the fatigue of moving, and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life; out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together! I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by and bye. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

"I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised; I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some

of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of 'Juvenile Poetry,' done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan, and I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health and liberty, and strength, and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the foul fiend!

"Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the Courier Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing 'The White Devil,' Green's 'Tu Quoque,' and the 'Honest Whore,' perhaps the most valuable volume of them all — *that* I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word, for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the 'Arcadia,' and Daniel, enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish Daniel, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Per-

haps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the 'Quarterly,' by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge its being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and, pray, do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure anything of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read 'Cœlebs?' It has reached eight editions in so many weeks, yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the drawback of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavored, it would have been something. I borrowed this 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning: —

'If ever I marry a wife
I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
For then I may sit in the bar,
And drink cold brandy-and-water.'

"I don't expect you can find time from your 'Friend' to write to me much, but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books, but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write; but I could not let 'The Friend' pass

without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticize till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you? — by what conveyance? — by Longman, Short-man, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to the Wordsworths. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all.

"C. L."

A journey into Wiltshire, to visit Hazlitt, followed Miss Lamb's recovery, and produced the following letters: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Monday, Oct. 30th, 1809.

"Dear Coleridge, — I have but this moment received your letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days, and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room. I have made several acquisitions since you saw them, — and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of *The Friend*. The account of Luther in the Warteburg is as fine as anything I ever read.* God forbid that a

* The Warteburg is a Castle, standing on a lofty rock, about two miles from the city of Eisenach, in which Luther was confined, under the friendly arrest of the Elector of Saxony, after Charles V. had pronounced against him the Ban in the Imperial Diet; where he composed some of his greatest works, and translated the New Testament; and where he is re-

man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of 100*l*. This Custom-and-Duty-Age would have

corded as engaged in the personal conflict with the Prince of Darkness, of which the vestiges are still shown in a black stain on the wall, from the inkstand hurled at the Enemy. In the Essay referred to, Coleridge accounts for the story — depicting the state of the great prisoner's mind in most vivid colors — and then presenting the following picture, which so nobly justifies Lamb's eulogy, that I venture to gratify myself by inserting it here.

"Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student, in his chamber in the Warteburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the distant plain of *Bischofsroda*, as a star on the mountain! Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes; his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain to the simple boor and to the humble artisan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it! Thick darkness lies on the original text; he counts the letters, he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar Spirits of an Oracle. In vain; thick darkness continues to cover it; not a ray of meaning dawns through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman Antichrist, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehood, that had dared place

> 'Within the sanctuary itself their shrines,
> Abominations — '

Now — O thought of humiliation — he must entreat its aid. See! there has the sly spirit of apostasy worked-in a phrase which favors the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for the dead; and what is worst of all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning: and no other meaning seems to lie *in* it, none to hover *above* it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk *beneath* it even in the depths of Cabala! This is the work of the Tempter; it is a cloud of darkness conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding, by the malice of the evil-one, and for a trial of his faith! Must he then at length confess, must he subscribe the name of LUTHER to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous Hierarchy? Never! Never!

"There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the Seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the Church itself, could intend no support to its corruptions — The Septuagint will have profaned the Altar of Truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal Bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honored Luther! as easily

made the Preacher on the Mount take out a license, and St. Paul's Epistles not missible without a stamp. O that you may find means to go on! But alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont? — Sotheby? What is become of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

"I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I

mightest thou convert the whole City of Rome, with the Pope and the conclave of Cardinals inclusively, as strike a spark of light from the words, and *nothing but words*, of the Alexandrine version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to *think*, yet continuing his brain on the stretch in solicitation of a thought; and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears, and inward defiances, and floating images of the Evil Being, their supposed personal author; he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber; during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere *thoughts* before, now, (the action and counterweight of his senses and of their impressions being withdrawn) shape and condense themselves into *things*, into realities! Repeatedly half-wakening, and his eyelids as often reclosing, the objects which really surround him form the place and scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot, perhaps on which his eyes had been fixed, vacantly, during the perplexed moments of his former meditation: the inkstand which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it; and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he *imagines* that he hurls it at the intruder, or not improbably in the first instant of awakening, while yet both his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he *actually* hurls it. Some weeks after, perhaps, during which interval he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to him in the body or out of the body, he discovers for the first time the dark spot on his wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge vouchsafed to him of the event having actually taken place."

hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up unto the old things.

"I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents, than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see — as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life, who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints and one for books; a summer and a winter-parlor. When shall I ever see you in them? C. L."

MISS LAMB TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"November 7th, 1809.

"My dear Sarah, — The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we spent with you is remembered by me with such regret that I feel quite discontented and Winter-slow-sick. I assure you I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house and out of it — the card-playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath, after your swift footsteps up the high hills, excepted; and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter, to make our toast seem like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we left our appetites behind us, and the dry loaf, which offended you, now comes in at night unaccompanied; but, sorry am I to add, it is soon followed by the pipe. We smoked the very first night of our arrival.

"Great news! I have just been interrupted by Mr. Daw, who came to tell me he was yesterday elected a

Royal Academician. He said none of his own friends voted for him, he got it by strangers, who were pleased with his picture of Mrs. White.

"Charles says he does not believe Northcote ever voted for the admission of any one. Though a very cold day, Daw was in a prodigious perspiration, for joy at his good fortune.

"More great news! My beautiful green curtains were put up yesterday, and all the doors listed with green baize, and four new boards put to the coal-hole, and fastening hasps put to the windows, and my dyed Manning-silk cut out.

"We had a good cheerful meeting on Wednesday, much talk of Winterslow, its woods and its sunflowers. I did not so much like P—— at Winterslow as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. We roasted the last of his 'Beech of oily nut prolific' on Friday at the Captain's. Nurse is now established in Paradise, *alias* the incurable ward of Westminster Hospital. I have seen her sitting in most superb state, surrounded by her seven incurable companions. They call each other ladies; nurse looks as if she would be considered as the first lady in the ward; only one seemed at all likely to rival her in dignity.

"A man in the India House has resigned, by which Charles will get twenty pounds a year, and White has prevailed on him to write some more lottery puffs; if that ends in smoke the twenty pounds is a sure card, and has made us very joyful.

"I continue very well, and return you very sincere thanks for my good health and improved looks, which have almost made Mrs. —— die with envy. She longs to come to Winterslow as much as the spiteful

elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds.

"Jane and I have agreed to boil a round of beef for your suppers when you come to town again. She (Jane) broke two of the Hogarth glasses, while we were away, whereat I made a great noise. Farewell. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the 'Life of Holcroft,' and the bearer thereof.

"Yours, most affectionately, M. LAMB.

"*Tuesday.*

"Charles told Mrs. ——, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden, which, water being scarce in your county, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came, in great haste, the next morning, to ask me if it were true.

"Your brother and sister are quite well."

The country excursions, with which Lamb sometimes occupied his weeks of vacation, were taken with fear and trembling — often foregone — and finally given up, in consequence of the sad effects which the excitements of travel and change produced in his beloved companion. The following refers to one of these disasters: —

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"August 9th, 1810.

"Dear H., — Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey) and continued so till Mon-

day night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

"I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah, — have just got her letter.

"H. Robinson has been to Blenheim, he says you will be sorry to hear that we should not have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

"The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

"I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

"Yours truly, C. LAMB.

"*Thursday.*"

Mr. Wordsworth's Essay on Epitaphs, afterwards appended to "The Excursion," produced the following letter: —

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Friday, 19th Oct. 1810. E. I. Ho.

"Dear W., — Mary has been very ill, which you have heard, I suppose, from the Montagues. She is very weak and low spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It

is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom. In particular I was pleased with your translation of that turgid epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a test. But what is the reason we have no good epitaphs after all?

"A very striking instance of your position might be found in the churchyard of Ditton-upon-Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton-upon-Thames has been blessed by the residence of a poet, who, for love or money, I do not well know which, has dignified every gravestone, for the last few years, with bran-new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the author's name at the bottom of each. This sweet Swan of Thames has artfully diversified his strains and his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice; more justly, perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug usher at his desk in the intervals of instruction, levelling his pen. Of death, as it consists of dust and worms, and mourners and uncertainty, he had never thought; but the word 'death' he had often seen separate and conjunct with other words, till he had learned to speak of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word 'God' in a pulpit; and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a skull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the sounding-board of the pulpit.

"But the epitaphs were trim, and sprag, and patent,

and pleased the survivors of Thames Ditton above the old mumpsimus of 'Afflictions Sore.' . . . . To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent feeling which dictated this dirge when new, must have suffered something in passing through so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington churchyard (I think) an Epitaph to an infant, who died '*Ætatis* four months,' with this seasonable inscription appended, 'Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land,' &c. Sincerely wishing your children long life to honor, &c.

"I remain, C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VI.

[1815 to 1818.]

LETTERS TO WORDSWORTH, ETC., CHIEFLY RESPECTING WORDSWORTH'S POEMS.

THE admirers of Wordsworth — few, but energetic and hopeful — were delighted, and his opponents excited to the expression of their utmost spleen, by the appearance, in 1814, of "The Excursion," (in the quarto form marked by the bitter flippancy of Lord Byron); and by the publication, in 1815, of two volumes of Poems, some of which only were new. The following letters are chiefly expressive of Lamb's feelings respecting these remarkable works, and the treatment which his own Review of the former re-

ceived from Mr. Gifford, then the Editor of the "Quarterly Review," for which it was written. The following letter is in acknowledgment of an early copy of "The Excursion."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. B. came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read—a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odor on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Churchyard;—the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and not duly taken away again;—the deaf man and the blind man;—the Jacobite and the Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile;—the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude;—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset is famous;* I

* The passage to which the allusion applies does not picture a sunset,

think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew P—— from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled setting; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified, such as the prophets saw them in that sunset — the wheel, the potter's clay, the wash-pot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the baskets of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon.*

"One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognized so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words — but I am feeling that which I cannot express. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church; do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost.

"I shall select a day or two, very shortly, when I am coolest in brain, to have a steady second reading,

but the effect of sunlight on a receding mist among the mountains, in the second book of "The Excursion."

* "Fix'd resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision — forms uncouth of mightiest powers,
For admiration and mysterious awe."

which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me. There is a great deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or south-countryman entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it, that by your system it was doubtful whether a liver in towns had a soul to be saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

"Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent, all that was country-fy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very color of green is vanished; the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there; booths and drinking-places go all round it for a mile and a half, I am confident — I might say two miles in circuit — the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air, and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park."

Lamb was delighted with the proposition, made through Southey, that he should review "The Excursion" in the "Quarterly"—though he had never before attempted contemporaneous criticism, and cherished a dislike to it, which the event did not diminish. The ensuing letter was addressed while meditating on his office, and uneasy lest he should lose it for want of leisure.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"My dear W.,—I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is, owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H., owing to bad peace speculations in the calico market. (I write this to W. W., Esq., Collector of Stamp Duties for the conjoint Northern Counties, not to W. W., Poet.) I go back, and have for these many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work, too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlitt has uncivilly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose — rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before — but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday), that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice; I perceived beauty dizzily. Now what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half-day, or hour even, till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get four weeks' absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin, I will most gladly do what is required, though I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory, and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a 'work' methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is,

to let me know from Southey, if that will be time enough for the 'Quarterly,' *i. e.*, suppose it done in three weeks from this date (19th Sept.): if not, it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you, and feels highly grateful for your 'Patent of Nobility,' and acknowledges the author of 'The Excursion' as the legitimate Fountain of Honor. We both agree that, to our feeling, Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry; the fact is explicable, but how few are those to whom it would have been rendered explicit. The unlucky reason of the detention of 'The Excursion' was Hazlitt, for whom M. Burney borrowed it, and, after reiterated messages, I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigor in them;* particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen.* I forget the passage, but the whole wore an air of despatch. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire, I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech.† That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons — no injustice even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish 'Can-

* This refers to an article of Hazlitt on "The Excursion," in the "Examiner," very fine in passages, but more characteristic of the critic than descriptive of the poem.

† The passage in which the copy of "Candide," found in the apartment of the Recluse, is described as "the dull production of a scoffer's brain," which had excited Hazlitt to energetic vindication of Voltaire from the charge of dulness. Whether the work, written in mockery of human hopes, be dull, I will not venture to determine; but I do not hesitate, at any risk, to avow a conviction that no book in the world is more adapted to make a good man wretched.

dide.' I know I tried to get through it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the dulness. Now I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

"I finish this after a raw ill-baked dinner fast gobbled up to set me off to office again, after working there till near four. O how I wish I were a rich man, even though I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting through that needle's eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos; is the Poet of 'The Excursion' a Christian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?

"I find I miscalled that celestial splendor of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shows my inaccuracy of head.

"Do, pray, indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am ashamed to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the first week in October. God send I may not be disappointed in that! Coleridge swore in a letter to me he would review 'The Excursion' in the 'Quarterly.' Therefore, though *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do anything, *when* done, I must know of him if he has anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

"I keep writing on, knowing the postage is no more for much writing, else so fagged and dispirited I am with cursed India House work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on 'The Excursion.' I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed book."

The next letter was written after the fatal critique

was despatched to the Editor, and before its appearance.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear W., — Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of 'The Excursion' does *toto cœlo*, differ in his notion of a country life, from a picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But, with a little explanation, you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London Tailor. What freaks tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common, moderate, self-enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying-tailor, I venture to say, is no more *in rerum naturâ* than a flying-horse or a Gryphon. His wheeling his airy-flight from the precipice you mention, had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words, is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the art of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common, uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again, the person who makes his smiles to be *heard*, is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac tailor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substi-

tute light-headedness for light-heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me. Enough of tailors!

"The 'scapes' of the Great God Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas — W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to M. M.* Phillips (now Sir Richard) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article of Pan, signed H., and adding, 'I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.' Hylas had put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Lofft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being 'good to all that wander in that perilous flood.' One J. Scott† (I know no more) is editor of 'The Champion.' Where is Coleridge?

"That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long, as it will seem to have done, from its postponement. I write with great difficulty, and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off gin. I hope you will see good-will in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all panegyric; I

* "Monthly Magazine."

† Afterwards the distinguished and unfortunate editor of the "London Magazine."

have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am, in mind, distant from you or your poem, but that both are close to me, among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts and determined upon not giving one that had been in the 'Examiner;' for extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowance of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of 'Sir Alfred Irthing,' and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. Hazlitt had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad.

"C. LAMB."

The apprehension expressed at the close of the last letter was dismally verified. The following contains Lamb's first burst of an indignation which lasted amidst all his gentleness and tolerance unquenched through life: —

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1814.

"Dear Wordsworth, — I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the Quarterly' is a spurious one, which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palmed upon it for mine. I never felt more

vexed in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it, out of spite at me, because he once suffered me to be called a lunatic in his Review.* The *language* he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was, in point of composition, the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ; and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm, if it had any, is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one.

"I have not the cursed alteration by me; I shall never look at it again; but for a specimen, I remember I had said the poet of 'The Excursion' 'walks through common forests as through some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher love-lays.' It is now (besides half-a-dozen alterations in the same half-dozen lines) 'but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him;'— that is one I remember.

"But that would have been little, putting his shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) instead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend; — for I reckon myself a dab at *prose;* — verse I leave to my betters: God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter! I have read

* In alluding to Lamb's note on the great scene of "The Broken Heart," where Calantha dances on, after hearing at every pause of some terrible calamity, a writer in the "Quarterly" had affected to excuse the writer as a "maniac;" a suggestion which circumstances rendered most cruel.

'It won't do.'* But worse than altering words; he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your 'Scheme of Harmonies,' as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the extracts as if they came in as a part of the text naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as, without conjuration, no man could tell what I was driving at. A proof of it you may see (though not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words. I had spoken something about 'natural methodism;' and after follows, 'and *therefore* the tale of Margaret should have been postponed' (I forget my words, or his words); now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th Psalm. The passage whence I deduced it, has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word altered makes one; but, indeed, of this review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew; but for the *writing-part* of it I was fully satisfied; I hoped it would make more than

* Though the article on "The Excursion," in the "Edinburgh Review," commenced "This will never do!" it contained ample illustrations of the author's genius, and helped the world to disprove its oracular beginning.

atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is, of course, the worse for their having been there; the eyes are pulled out, and the bleeding sockets are left.

"I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labors of years turned into contempt by scoundrels!

"But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression (I know there were many); every warm expression (there was nothing else) is vulgarized and frozen. — But if they catch me in their camps again, let them spitchcock me! They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford, I suppose, never waived a right he had since he commenced author. Heaven confound him and all caitiffs! C. L."

The following letter to Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, who resided with the poet at Rydal, relates to matters of yet nearer interest.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"Thursday, 19th Oct., 1815.

"Dear Miss H., — I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely, and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half

being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favorable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks; — 'the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.' Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can — all the kindness I can, towards you all — God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge.

"Yours truly, C. LAMB."

The following three letters best speak for themselves: —

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to Dorothea. Will none of you ever be in London again?

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth, — You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a character in antithetic manner, which I do not know why you left out, — the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete, — and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), 'the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice; I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the 'malicious' will take it to himself. If you give 'em an inch, &c. The preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*, — but you have set it

there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes, which are new to me, are so much in the old tone, that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowledge, the 'Four Yew Trees,'* and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me — 'Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow.' It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. 'Laodamia' is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

"Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way, which comes not every day,† the Latin poems of V.

* The poem on the four great yew-trees of Borrowdale, which the poet has, by the most potent magic of the imagination, converted into a temple for the ghastly forms of Death and Time "to meet at noon-tide," — a passage surely not surpassed in any English poetry written since the days of Milton.

† The following little passage about Vincent Bourne has been previously printed.

Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is, that your 'Power of Music' reminded me of his poem of 'The Ballad-singer in the Seven Dials.' Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C, which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's 'Principia?' I was lately fatiguing myself with going through a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow; excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regales; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to Bourne. What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-ful* creature! sucking from every flower, making a flower of everything, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

"I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems,* or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do altogether. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in

* The "Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches among the Alps" — Wordsworth's earliest poems — now happily restored in their entirety to their proper places in the poet's collected works.

the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems 'by a female friend.' * The one on the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it. I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged, and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night; last night till nine. My business and office business in general have increased so; I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holiday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some five days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holidays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life, I may reckon two thirds as dead, for time that a man may call his own is his life; and hard work and thinking about it taint even the leisure hours, — stain Sunday with work-day contemplations. This is Sunday; and the headache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort.

'To them each evening had its glittering star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun,' —

* By Miss Dorothea Wordsworth.

to such straits am I driven for the life of life, Time! O that from that superfluity of holiday-leisure my youth wasted, 'Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.' N. B. — I have left off spirituous liquors for four or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting.* Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

"O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! from some returned English I hear, that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets, — scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its 'gripple merchants' as Drayton hath it — 'born to be the curse of this brave isle!' I invoke this, not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

"Farewell, in haste, from a head that is too ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you! C. LAMB."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Excuse this maddish letter; I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth, — The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The 'Night Piece,' to which you refer me, I

* Alas! for moral certainty in this moral but mortal world! Lamb's resolution to leave off spirituous liquors was a brave one; but he strengthened and rewarded it by such copious libations of porter, that his sister, for whose sake mainly he attempted the sacrifice, entreated him to "live like himself," and in a few weeks after this assurance he obeyed her.

meant fully to have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me — I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated, (by the way, I must look out V. B. for you). So I had meant to have mentioned 'Yarrow Visited,' with that stanza, 'But thou, that didst appear so fair;'* than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry; — yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last — this has all fine, except, perhaps, that *that* of 'studious ease and generous cares,' has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. 'The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale' is a charming counterpart to 'Poor Susan,' with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the 'Old Thief and the Boy by his side,' which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; 'Susan' stood for the

* "But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation."

representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; 'bright volumes of vapor,' &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant-maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her 'a poor outcast' seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now,— I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that 'Light-hearted boys, I will build up a Giant with you.' It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a-maying. (N. B.) I don't often go out a-maying;— *Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly is divine;* the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless — I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves — Shakspeare had done something for the filial, in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in

* The admirable little poem, entitled "The Force of Prayer," developing the depths of a widowed mother's grief, whose only son has been drowned in attempting to leap over the precipice of the "Wharf" at Bolton Abbey. The first line, printed in old English characters, from some old English ballad,

"What is good for a bootless bene?"

suggests Miss Lamb's single pun. The following are the profoundest

Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering; what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or — I hope I may add — that I know them to be good? Apropos — when I first opened upon the just-mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, '*What is good for a bootless bene?*' To which, with infinite presence of mind, (as the jest-book has it,) she answered, 'a shoeless pea.' It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr. Johnson, of the 'Man in the Strand,' and that from 'The Babes in the Wood.' I was thinking whether, taking your own glorious lines —

> 'And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,'

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering it to —

> 'And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,'

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in

stanzas among those which excite her brother's most just admiration: —

> "If for a lover the lady wept,
> A solace she might borrow
> From death and from the passion of death; —
> Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.
>
> She weeps not for the wedding-day,
> Which was to be to-morrow:
> Her hope was a further-looking hope,
> And hers is a mother's sorrow."

my life if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that 'White Doe' you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, *i. e.*, printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old, obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof-sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

"My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it?) querulousness about it; yet, hang it! now I remember better, there is not; it is calm, melancholy and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245;

but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me, in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading 'No thoroughfare.' Robinson's is entire: I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, &c. I think I could say something about him myself, but, Lord bless me! these 'merchants and their spicy drugs,' which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I 'engross' when I should 'pen' a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe; and rot the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks! *Vale.*

"Yours, dear W., and all yours,

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"April 9th, 1816.

"Dear Wordsworth, — Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read, but don't read;

and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Covent Garden Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, though (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, though, it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil or a Mr. Kean. However, he is going to-day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter, which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate, till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature, by instinct, to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chymist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls! He has done pretty well as yet.

"Tell Miss H., my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time; God bless him!

"Tell Mrs. W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terri-

ble, dark as Lycophron. 'Likelihood,' for instance, is thus typified . . . .* I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eyesight!

"Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

"I am called off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool — but why do I relate this to you, who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interest, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu!

"C. LAMB.

"A longer letter when C. is gone back into the country, relating his success, &c. — *my* judgment of *your* new books, &c. &c. — I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

"Yours again, C. L."

The next letter is fantastically written beneath a regular official order, the words in italics being printed.

"SIR, — *Please to state the weights and amounts of the following Lots of*
sold *Sale*, 181 for

"*Your obedient Servant*,

"CHAS. LAMB."

* Here is a most inimitable scrawl.

"Accountant's Office, 26th April, 1816.*

"Dear W., — I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it, and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would 'batter at your peace.' With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted; called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve. Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. 'Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence' is exquisite. The poems I endeavored not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture-gallery I was never at before, and going by to-day by chance, found the door open, and having but five minutes to look about me, peeped in; just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing 'Christabel,' by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, 'Kubla Khan,' which said vision he repeats so enchantingly, that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlor while he

* This is shown by the postmark to be an error; it should be 1818.

sings or says it; but there is an observation, 'Never tell thy dreams,' and I am almost afraid that 'Kubla Khan' is an owl that won't bear daylight. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young, I used to chant with ecstasy 'MILD ARCADIANS EVER BLOOMING,' till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and I think it better than 'Windsor Forest,' 'Dying Christian's Address,' &c. Coleridge has sent his tragedy to D. L. T.; it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is, at present, under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?) at Highgate, where he plays at leaving off laud—m; I think his essentials not touched; he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face, when he repeats his verses, hath its ancient glory; an archangel a little damaged. Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at lengtn to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough; Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles, and the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *Author of the Excursion*, I should, in a very little time, lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material!* There is not as much metaphysics in thirty-

six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's 'Treatise on the Human Understanding,' or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the 'Pleasures of Hope,' or more natural 'Beggar's Petition.' I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now, within four lines, I was called off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

"N. B. — Nothing said above to the contrary, but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any; but I pay dearer; what amuses others robs me of myself; my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work; it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump, from ten to four; but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head aches, and you have had enough. God bless you! C. LAMB."

CHAPTER VII.

[1818 to 1825.]

THE "LONDON MAGAZINE" — CHARACTER AND FATE OF MR. JOHN SCOTT, ITS EDITOR — GLIMPSE OF MR. THOMAS GRIFFITHS WAINWRIGHT, ONE OF ITS CONTRIBUTORS — MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS OF LAMB TO WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, AND OTHERS.

LAMB'S association with Hazlitt in the year 1820 introduced him to that of the "London Magazine," which supplied the finest stimulus his intellect had ever received, and induced the composition of the Essays fondly and familiarly known under the fantastic title of *Elia*. Never was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices, numbering a list of contributors more original in thought, more fresh in spirit, more sportive in fancy, or directed by an editor better qualified by nature and study to preside, than this "London." There was Lamb, with humanity ripened among town-bred experiences, and pathos matured by sorrow, at his wisest, sagest, airiest, *in*discreetest, best; Barry Cornwall. in the first bloom of his modest and enduring fame, streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, lighting up the wildest eccentricities and most striking features of many-colored life with vivid fancy; and, with others of less note, Hazlitt, whose pen, unloosed from the chain which earnest thought and metaphysical dreamings had woven, gave radiant expression to the results of the solitary musings of many years. Over these contributors John Scott presided, himself a critic of remarkable candor, elo-

quence, and discrimination, unfettered by the dogmas of contending schools of poetry and art; apt to discern the good and beautiful in all; and having, as editor, that which Kent recognized in Lear, which subjects revere in kings, and boys admire in schoolmasters, and contributors should welcome in editors — *authority;* — not manifested in a worrying, teasing, intolerable interference in small matters, but in a judicious and steady superintendence of the whole; with a wise allowance of the occasional excesses of wit and genius. In this respect, Mr. Scott differed entirely from a celebrated poet, who was induced, just a year after, to undertake the Editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," an office for which, it may be said, with all veneration for his poetic genius, he was the most unfit person who could be found in the wide world of letters — who regarded a magazine as if it were a long affidavit, or a short answer in Chancery, in which the absolute truth of every sentiment and the propriety of every jest were verified by the editor's oath or solemn affirmation; who stopped the press for a week at a comma; balanced contending epithets for a fortnight; and, at last, grew rash in despair, and tossed the nearest, and often the worst article, "unwhipped of justice," to the impatient printer. Mr. Scott, indeed, was more fit to preside over a little commonwealth of authors than to hold a despotic rule over subject contributors; he had not the airy grace of Jeffrey by which he might give a certain familiar liveliness to the most laborious disquisitions, and shed the glancing light of fancy among party manifestoes; nor the boisterous vigor of Wilson, riotous in power, reckless in wisdom, fusing the production of various intellects, into one brilliant reflection of his

own master-mind; — and it was well that he wanted these weapons of a tyranny which his chief contributors were too original and too sturdy to endure. He heartily enjoyed his position; duly appreciated his contributors and himself; and when he gave audience to some young aspirant for periodical honors at a late breakfast, amidst the luxurious confusion of newspapers, reviews, and uncut novels, lying about in fascinating litter, and carelessly enunciated schemes for bright successions of essays, he seemed destined for many years of that happy excitement in which thought perpetually glows into unruffled but energetic language, and is assured by the echoes of the world.

Alas! a few days after he thus appeared the object of admiration and envy to a young visitor, in his rooms in York Street, he was stretched on a bed of mental agony — the foolish victim of the guilty custom of a world which would have laughed at him for regarding himself as within the sphere of its opinion, if he had not died to shame it! In a luckless hour, instead of seeking to oppose the bitter personalities of "Blackwood" by the exhibition of a serener power, he rushed with spurious chivalry into a personal contest; caught up the weapons which he had himself denounced, and sought to unmask his opponents and draw them beyond the pale of literary courtesy; placed himself thus in a doubtful position in which he could neither consistently reject an appeal to the conventional arbitrament of violence nor embrace it; lost his most legitimate opportunity of daring the unhallowed strife, and found another with an antagonist connected with the quarrel only by too zealous a friendship; and, at last, met his death almost by lamentable accident, in the uncertain

glimmer of moonlight, from the hand of one who went out resolved not to harm him! Such was the melancholy result — first of a controversy too envenomed — and afterwards of enthralment in usages, absurd in all, but most absurd when applied by a literary man to a literary quarrel. Apart from higher considerations, it may befit a life destined for the listless excesses of gayety to be cast on an idle brawl; — "a youth of folly, an old age of cards" may be no great sacrifice to preserve the hollow truce of fashionable society; but for men of thought — whose minds are their possession, and who seek to live in the minds of others by sympathy with their thoughts — for *them* to hazard a thoughtful being because they dare not own that they prefer life to death — contemplation to the grave — the preparation for eternity to the unbidden entrance on its terrors, would be ridiculous if it did not become tragical. "Sir, I am a metaphysician!" said Hazlitt once, when in a fierce dispute respecting the colors of Holbein and Vandyke, words almost became things; "and nothing makes an impression upon me but abstract ideas;" and woful, indeed, is the mockery when thinkers condescend to be duellists!

The Magazine did not perish with its Editor; though its unity of purpose was lost, it was still rich in essays of surpassing individual merit; among which the masterly vindication of the true dramatic style by Darley; the articles of Cary, the admirable translator of Dante; and the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," held a distinguished place. Mr. De Quincy, whose youth had been inspired by enthusiastic admiration of Coleridge, shown in contributions to "The Friend," not unworthy of his master, and substantial

contributions of the blessings of fortune, came up to London, and found an admiring welcome from Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the publishers into whose hands the "London Magazine" had passed. After the good old fashion of the GREAT TRADE, these genial booksellers used to assemble their contributors round their hospitable table in Fleet Street, where Mr. De Quincy was introduced to his new allies. Among the contributors who partook of their professional festivities, was a gentleman whose subsequent career has invested the recollection of his appearances in the familiarity of social life with fearful interest — Mr. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright. He was then a young man; on the bright side of thirty; with a sort of undress military air, and the conversation of a smart, lively, clever, heartless, voluptuous coxcomb. It was whispered that he had been an officer in the Dragoons; had spent more than one fortune; and he now condescended to take a part in periodical literature, with the careless grace of an amateur who felt himself above it. He was an artist also; sketched boldly and graphically; exhibited a portfolio of his own drawings of female beauty, in which the voluptuous trembled on the borders of the indelicate; and seized on the critical department of the Fine Arts, both in and out of the Magazine, undisturbed by the presence or pretensions of the finest critic on Art who ever wrote — William Hazlitt. On this subject, he composed, for the Magazine, under the signature of "Janus Weathercock," articles of flashy assumption — in which disdainful notices of living artists were set off by fascinating references to the personal appearance, accomplishments, and luxurious appliances of the writer, ever the

first hero of his essay. He created a new sensation in the sedate circle, not only by his braided surtouts, jewelled fingers, and various neck-handkerchiefs, but by ostentatious contempt for everything in the world but elegant enjoyment. Lamb, who delighted to find sympathy in dissimilitude, fancied that he really liked him; took, as he ever did, the genial side of character; and, instead of disliking the rake in the critic, thought it pleasant to detect so much taste and good-nature in a fashionable *roué;* and regarded all his vapid gayety, which to severer observers looked like impertinence, as the playful effusion of a remarkably guileless nature. We lost sight of him when the career of the "London Magazine" ended; and Lamb did not live to learn the sequel of his history.

In 1819, Mr. Wordsworth, encouraged by the extending circle of his earnest admirers, announced for publication his "Peter Bell" — a poem written in the first enthusiasm of his system, and exemplifying, amidst beauty and pathos of the finest essence, some of its most startling peculiarities. Some wicked jester, gifted with more ingenuity and boldness than wit, anticipated the real "Simon Pure," by a false one, burlesquing some of the characteristics of the poet's homeliest style. This grave hoax produced the following letter from Lamb, appropriately written in alternate lines of red and black ink, till the last sentence, in which the colors are alternated, word by word — even to the signature — and "Mary's love," at the close; so that "Mary" is *black*, and her "love" *red*.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"1819.

"Dear Wordsworth,— I received a copy of 'Peter Bell' a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humor, if it is meant for humor, is forced; and then the price! — sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind I do not mean *your* 'Peter Bell,' but *a* 'Peter Bell,' which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop-window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from the supplementary preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads.' Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Who started the spurious 'P. B.' I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering ——; but I have heard no name mentioned. 'Peter Bell' (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. 'Heartleap Well' is the tale for me; in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add 'The Waggoner'? — Have I thanked you, though, yet, for 'Peter Bell'? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story with a very long face, and I see him

far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking; he is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock 'P. B.' had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the 'Excursion.' I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters; — hang 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as anybody's, and, God bless him! anybody's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excited curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his

presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off — and by this means one copy of 'my works' served for G. D. — and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

"Yours truly,

"CHARLES LAMB.

"Mary's love."

The following letter, probably written about this time, is entirely in red ink.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear Coleridge, — A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the

witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcass, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of ——'s lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since; he almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work 'telling again,' as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and a (not friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, 'you know best.' I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations, so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet * I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be P——'s. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet 'about Browne' into 'Blackwood'? I did not. So no more till we meet.

"Ever yours, C. L."

* A sonnet in "Blackwood," dated Manchester, and signed C. L.

The following letter (of postmark 1822) is addressed to Trinity College, Cambridge, when Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Dr. Wordsworth.

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for your fair niece's sake.

"1822.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth, — I had just written the above endearing words when M—— tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose-pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M——, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with a rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcass holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy * shall be welcome to a mince-pie, and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations; everybody likes them, except the author of the 'Pleasures of Hope.' Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell, at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey, (who found out that blood was red,) at Dr. Davy's;

* Mr. Wordsworth's second son, then at the Charterhouse.

you should see them. Coleridge is pretty well; I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be 'when winter bleak had charms for me.' I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

"Mrs. P——, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the W——'s in Trumpington Street. They are capital people. Ask anybody you meet who is the biggest woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. ——; she broke down two benches in Trinity gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the Societies as to repairing it. In warm weather, she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!), and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends toothaches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at ten, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

"Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary for not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter?

"C. L."

The following letter to Mr. Walter Wilson, who was composing a "Life of De Foe," in reply to inquiries on various points of the great novelist's history, is *dated* 24th Feb., 1823.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"Dear W., — I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have anything to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of 'Roxana,' the preface to which stated that the author had left out all that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in the way of his, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falkner from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* 'Roxana.' The prologue you speak of was mine, and so named, but not worth much. You ask me for two or three pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. Maybe I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer 'Colonel Jack' to either 'Robinson Crusoe' or

'Roxana.' I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention.* I do not know that Swift mentions him; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond 'Crusoe.' I do not know who wrote 'Quarl.' I never thought of 'Quarl' as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the 'Englishman' by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of 'Crusoe.' You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own memoirs; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. 'Puzzelli' puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about 'Donald M'Leod.' I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about De Foe or from you.

"Your old friend, C. LAMB.

"From my and your old compound."

The following is the fragment of a letter addressed in the beginning of 1823 to Miss Hutchinson at Ramsgate, whither she had gone with an invalid relative.

* Those who wish to read an admirable character of De Foe, associated with the most valuable information respecting his personal history, should revert to an article in the "Edinburgh Review," on De Foe, attributed to the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and of the delightful "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," almost as charming as its subject

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"April 25th, 1822.

"Dear Miss H., — It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. M——'s spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows, whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbor. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all; (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in.) 'Time' (as was said of one of us) 'toils after us in vain.' I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervor to recall them; only Peter left his key — the iron one of the two that 'shuts amain' — and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray, remember me euphoniously to Mr. G——. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints? — and does it stand at Kingsgate?"

In this year, Lamb made his greatest essay in house-keeping, by occupying Colebrook Cottage at Islington, on the banks of his beloved New River. There oc-

curred the immersion of George Dyer at noontide, which supplies the subject of one of "The Last Essays of Elia;" and which is veritably related in the following letter of Lamb, which is curious, as containing the germ of that delightful article, and the first sketches of the Brandy-and-Water Doctor therein celebrated as miraculous.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"November, 1823.

"Dear Mrs. H., — Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week, George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noonday*), on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld, at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out, from her kitchen-window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out, they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. 'Send for the Doctor!' they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public-house at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water-practice; having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and

when I came home at four, to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed, with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paling before the river, but I cannot see, because an absent man chooses to walk into a river, with his eyes open, at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

"I have had the honor of dining at the Mansion House, on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom, the Chairman, and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

"We continue to like our house prodigiously. Our kind remembrances to you and yours. — Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate."

Requested by the Quaker Poet, to advise him on a proposal for appropriating a large sum of money raised by a few admiring friends to his comfort in advancing years, Lamb gave his wise and genial judgment in the following letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 24th, 1824.

"Dear B. B., — I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offer'd. I can see nothing injurious to your most honorable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical Ministry — nothing worse — the Minister is worthy of the hire. — The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance, would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word light, which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation —

1 2 1 2
'Make my *dark heavy* poem, *light* and *light*,'

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. — I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's 'Cases of Conscience,' and Jeremy Taylor's 'Ductor Dubitantium,' the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages, and when you have thoroughly

digested the admirable reasons pro and con which they give for every possible case, you will be — just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best Casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth in the pleasant comedy of 'Wild Oats' has it, 'there is no harm in a Guinea.' A fortiori, there is less in 2000.

"I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the Bank; but in either case do not refuse an honest Service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily. C. L."

The following, with its grotesque sketches, is addressed also

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"December 1st, 1824.

"Dear B. B., — If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, &c. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.

'The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet-williams, and that sort. My friend in

Canton is Inspector of Teas, his name is Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

"Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2*s.* 6*d.* are prudently going to raise their price another shilling; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the 'New Monthly,' they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcass of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like G. D. multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance. C. L."

The following letter to Miss Hutchinson, at Torquay, refers to some of Lamb's later articles, published in the "London Magazine," which, in extending its size and pretensions to a three-and-sixpenny miscellany, had lost much of its spirit. He exults, however, in his veracious "Memoir of Liston!"

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

"January 20, 1825.

"Dear Miss H., — Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that we used to pickaxe pen, about this season, in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another goose-pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a partridge. You ask about the editor of the 'London'; I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge at t'other shilling. De Quincy's 'Parody' was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum.** The 'Horns' is in a poor taste, resembling the most labored papers in the 'Spectator.' I had signed it 'Jack Horner'; but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the 'Memoir of Liston'? — and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, pure invention, and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic

* Mr. De Quincy had commenced a series of letters in the "London Magazine," "To a Young Man whose education has been neglected," as a vehicle for conveying miscellaneous information in his admirable style. Upon this hint Lamb, with the assent which Mr. De Quincy could well afford to give, contributed a parody on the scheme, in "A Letter to an Old Gentleman whose education has been neglected."

account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next number I figure as a theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter, *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me—

"'Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
Some folks might call me sinner,
The one invented half a coat,
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,
And fitted to console one;
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one.'

"I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory; but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c. ELIA."

The first dawning hope of Lamb's emancipation from the India House is suggested in the following note to Manning, proposing a visit, in which he refers to a certificate of non-capacity for hard desk-work, given by a medical friend.

TO MR. MANNING.

"My dear M. — You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw T—— yesternight, who has done for me what may

'To all my nights and days to come,
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.'

But I dare not hope for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non*-capacitated, (I cannot write it *in*-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susuration of this to *anybody!*

"Mary's love. C. LAMB."

The dream was realized — in April, 1825, the "world-wearied clerk" went home forever — with what delight has been told in the elaborate raptures of his "Superannuated Man," and in the letters already published. The following may be now added to these, illucidative of his too brief raptures.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Dear W. — I write post-haste to insure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations! I may now date from the sixth week of my 'Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall.' I have lived so much in it, that a summer seems already past; and 'tis but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners! O the

carking cares! O the money-grubbers! Sempiternal muckworms!

"Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont; I think that circumstance made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it? — and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

"Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay, by which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional 100*l.* I fancy. His book, too, ('Commentary on Bishop Leighton,') is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

"In the 'London,' which is just out (1st May), are two papers entitled the 'Superannuated Man,' which I wish you to see; and also, 1st April, a little thing called 'Barbara S——,' a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The L. M., if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

"I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenæ;* for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS. But *couragio!* I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out; an anchorage for *age* and school of economy, when necessity comes; but without this latter, I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction; else I do sometimes ruralize in fancy.

"Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d, I only mean deuced. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that make it necessary to *authorize* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

"Excuse my abortive scribble.

"Yours, not in more haste than heart, C. L."

"Love and recollects to all the Wms., Doras, Maries round your Wrekin.

"Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B., for I am shyish of applying to him."

CHAPTER VIII.

[1825 to 1834.]

LETTERS OF LAMB'S LAST YEARS.

How imperfectly the emancipation, so rapturously hailed, fulfilled its promises; how Lamb left Islington for Enfield, and there, after a while, subsided into a lodger; and how, at last, he settled at Edmonton to die, sufficiently appear in the former series of his letters. Those which occupy this chapter, scattered through nine years, have either been subsequently communicated by the kindness of the possessors, or were omitted for some personal reason which has lost its force in time. The following, addressed in 1829 to the Editor, on occasion of his giving to a child the name of "Charles Lamb," though withheld from an indisposition to intrude matters so personal to himself on the reader, may now, on his taking farewell of the subject, find its place.

TO MR. TALFOURD.

"Dear Talfourd, — You could not have told me of a more friendly thing than you have been doing. I am proud of my namesake. I shall take care never to do

any dirty action, pick pockets, or anyhow get myself hanged, for fear of reflecting ignominy upon your young Chrisom. I have now a motive to be good. I shall not *omnis moriar;* — my name borne down the black gulf of oblivion.

"I shall survive in eleven letters, five more than Cæsar. Possibly I shall come to be knighted, or more! Sir C. L. Talfourd, Bart.!

"Yet hath it an authorish twang with it, which will wear out with my name for poetry. Give him a smile from me till I see him. If you do not drop down before, some day in the *week after next* I will come and take one night's lodging with you, if convenient, before you go hence. You shall name it. We are in town to-morrow *speciali gratiâ*, but by no arrangement can get up near you.

"Believe us both, with greatest regards, yours and Mrs. Talfourd's.

"CHARLES LAMB-PHILO-TALFOURD.

"I come as near it as I can." *

* The child who bore the name so honored by his parents, survived his godfather only a year — dying at Brighton, whither he had been taken in the vain hope of restoration, on the 3rd December, 1835. Will the reader forgive the weakness which prompts the desire, in this place, to link their memories together, by inserting a few verses which, having been only published at the end of the last small edition of the Editor's dramas, may have missed some of the friendly eyes for which they were written?

Our gentle Charles has pass'd away
From earth's short bondage free,
And left to us its leaden day
And mist-enshrouded sea.

Here, by the ocean's terraced side,
Sweet hours of hope were known,
When first the triumph of its tide
Seem'd omen of our own

The following eight Letters, evoked by Lamb's excellent and indefatigable correspondent, Barton, speak for themselves: —

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 2nd, 1825.

"My dear B. B., — My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a let-

That eager joy the sea-breeze gave,
When first it raised his hair,
Sunk with each day's retiring wave,
Beyond the reach of prayer.

The sun-blink that through drizzling mist,
To flickering hope akin,
Lone waves with feeble fondness kiss'd,
No smile as faint can win;

Yet not in vain with radiance weak
The heavenly stranger gleams —
Not of the world it lights to speak,
But that from whence it streams.

That world our patient sufferer sought,
Serene with pitying eyes,
As if his mounting spirit caught
The wisdom of the skies.

With boundless love it look'd abroad
For one bright moment given,
Shone with a loveliness that awed,
And quiver'd into Heaven.

A year made slow by care and toil
Has paced its weary round,
Since Death enrich'd with kindred spoil
The snow-clad, frost-ribb'd ground.

Then LAMB, with whose endearing name
Our boy we proudly graced,
Shrank from the warmth of sweeter fame
Than ever bard embraced.

Still 'twas a mournful joy to think
Our darling might supply,
For years to us, a living link,
With name that cannot die.

ter. My poor pittance in the 'London' you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely

And though such fancy gleam no more
On earthly sorrow's night,
Truth's nobler torch unveils the shore
Which lends to both its light.

The nursling there that hand may take,
None ever grasp'd in vain,
And smiles of well-known sweetness wake,
Without their tinge of pain.

Though, 'twixt the child and childlike bard
Late seem'd distinction wide,
They now may trace, in Heaven's regard,
How near they were allied.

Within the infant's ample brow
Blythe fancies lay unfurl'd,
Which all uncrush'd may open now
To charm a sinless world.

Though the soft spirit of those eyes
Might ne'er with LAMB's compete —
Ne'er sparkle with a wit as wise,
Or melt in tears, as sweet,

The nursling's unforgotten look
A kindred love reveals,
With his who never friend forsook,
Or hurt a thing that feels.

In thought profound, in wildest glee,
In sorrow's lengthening range,
His guileless soul of infancy
Endured no spot or change.

From traits of each our love receives
For comfort nobler scope;
While light which childlike genius leaves
Confirms the infant's hope:

And in that hope with sweetness fraught
Be aching hearts beguiled,
To blend in one delightful thought
The Poet and the Child!

than for the introduction you favored us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs.* Anne Knight for the life of me. She is a very pleas——, but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves, because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest *remembrances* to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again, I count upon another pleasant Bridge walk with her. Tell her, I got home, time for a rubber; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldlings.

"I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now; but I liked the dedication much, and the apology for your bald burying grounds. To Shelley, but *that* is not new. To the young vesper-singer, Great Bealings, Playford, and what not?

"If there be a cavil, it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated till a sort of triteness attends them. It seems as if you were forever losing friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often, and so good in your parts? The topic taken from the consideration that they are snatched away from *possible vanities*, seems hardly sound; for to an Omniscient eye their conditional failings must be one with their actual; but I am too unwell for theology.

"Such as I am,

"I am yours and A. K.'s truly,

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 10th, 1825.

"We shall be soon again at Colebrook.

"Dear B. B., — You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I had rather talk with you, and Anne Knight, quietly at Colebrook Lodge, over the matter of your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly; what I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural — devotional topics — admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer-books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

"I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors — but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child, what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is false to say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, &c. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt

acts, by being snatched away at all tells in its favor. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse, but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying his eyes by seeing what we will do, when he knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemned before commission. In these things we grope and flounder, and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatch'd from vice (no great compliment to it, by the by), let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day — fire-purified martyrs, and torment-sifted confessors — what know we? We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply, and assign large revenues to minors, incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into Paradise are sculptured out at a penny a letter, two pence a syllable, &c. It is all a mystery, and the more I try to express my meaning (having none that is clear), the more I founder. Finally, write what to your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, seems best, and be careless about the whimsies of such a half-baked notionist as I am. We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropt the 'London.' It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I

shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that is bad. Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K., and yourself, and strangers'-greeting to Lucy — is it Lucy or Ruth? — that gathers wise sayings in a Book.

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B., — I don't know why I have delay'd so long writing. 'Twas a fault. The under-current of excuse to my mind was that I had heard of the vessel in which Mitford's jars were to come; that it had been obliged to put into Batavia to refit (which accounts for its delay), but was daily expected. Days are past, and it comes not, and the mermaids may be drinking their tea out of his china for aught I know; but let's hope not. In the mean time I have paid 28*l.*, &c. for the freight and prime cost. But do not mention it. I was enabled to do it by a receipt of 30*l.* from Colburn, with whom, however, I have done. I should else have run short. For I just make ends meet. We will wait the arrival of the trinkets, and to ascertain their full expense, and then bring in the bill.

"Colburn had something of mine in last month, which he has had in hand these seven months, and had lost, or couldn't find room for: I was used to different treatment in the 'London,' and have forsworn periodicals. I am going thro' a course of reading at the Museum: the Garrick plays, out of part of which I formed my specimens. I have two thousand to go

thro'; and in a few weeks have despatched the tythe of 'em. It is a sort of office to me; hours, ten to four, the same. It does me good. Man must have regular occupation, that has been used to it.

"Will you pardon my neglect? Mind, again I say, don't show this to M.; let me wait a little longer to know the event of his luxuries. Heaven send him his jars uncrack'd, and me my ——.

"Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend, in which Mary joins, C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B., — The *Busy Bee*, as Hood after Dr. Watts apostrophizes thee, and well dost thou deserve it for thy labors in the Muses' gardens, wandering over parterres of Think-on-mes and Forget-me-nots, to a total impossibility of forgetting thee, — thy letter was acceptable, thy scruples may be dismissed, thou art *rectus in curiâ*, not a word more to be said, *verbum sapienti*, and so forth, the matter is decided with a white stone, classically, mark me, and the apparitions vanish'd which haunted me, only the cramp, Caliban's distemper, clawing me in the calvish part of my nature, makes me ever and anon roar bullishly, squeak cowardishly, and limp cripple-ishly. Do I write quakerly and simply, 'tis my most Master Mathews' like intention to do it. See Ben Jonson. — I think you told me your acquaintance with the drama was confin'd to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie: some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip. I have fighting in my head the plots, characters, situa-

tions, and sentiments of 400 old plays (bran new to me) which I have been digesting at the Museum, and my appetite sharpens to twice as many more, which I mean to course over this winter. I can scarce avoid dialogue fashion in this letter. I soliloquize my meditations, and habitually speak dramatic blank verse without meaning it. Do you see Mitford? He will tell you something of my labors. Tell him I am sorry to have missed seeing him, to have talked over those old Treasures. I am still more sorry for his missing Pots. But I shall be sure of the earliest intelligence of the 'Lost Tribes.' His Sacred Specimens are a thankful addition to my shelves. Marry, I could wish he had been more careful of corrigenda. I have discover'd certain which have slipt his errata. I put 'em in the next page, as perhaps thou canst transmit them to him. For what purpose, but to grieve him (which yet I should be sorry to do), but then it shows my learning, and the excuse is complimentary, as it implies their correction in a future edition. His own things in the book are magnificent, and as an old Christ's Hospitaller I was particularly refresh'd with his eulogy on our Edward. Many of the choice excerpta were new to me. Old Christmas is a-coming, to the confusion of Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that unwassailing crew. He cometh not with his wonted gait, he is shrunk nine inches in his girth, but is yet a lusty fellow. Hood's book is mighty clever, and went off 600 copies the first day. Sion's Songs do not disperse so quickly. The next leaf is for Rev. J. M. In this adieu, thine briefly, in a tall friendship,

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"June 11, 1827.

"Dear B. B.,—Martin's 'Belshazzar' (the picture) I have seen. Its architectural effect is stupendous, but the human figures, the squalling contorted little antics that are playing at being frightened, like children at a sham ghost, who half know it to be a mask, are detestable. Then the *letters* are nothing more than a transparency lighted up, such as a Lord might order to be lit up on a sudden at a Christmas gambol, to scare the ladies. The *type* is as plain as Baskerville's — they should have been dim, full of mystery, letters to the mind rather than the eye.

"Rembrandt has painted only Belshazzar and a courtier or two, (taking a part of the banquet for the whole,) not fribbled out a mob of fine folks. Then everything is so distinct, to the very necklaces, and that foolish little prophet. What *one* point is there of interest? The ideal of such a subject is, that you the spectator should see nothing but what at the time you would have seen, — the *hand*, and the *King*, — not to be at leisure to make tailor-remarks on the dresses, or, Dr. Kitchener-like, to examine the good things at table.

"Just such a confused piece is his 'Joshua,' frittered into a thousand fragments, little armies here, little armies there, — you should see only the *Sun* and *Joshua*. If I remember, he has not left out that luminary entirely, but for Joshua, I was ten minutes a-finding him out. Still he is showy in all that is not the human figure or the preternatural interest; but the first are below a drawing-school girl's attainment, and

the last is a phantasmagoric trick, — 'Now you shall see what you shall see, dare is Balshazzar and dare is Daniel.'

"You have my thoughts of M., and so adieu!

"C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B. B., — You will understand my silence when I tell you that my sister, on the very eve of entering into a new house we have taken at Enfield, was surprised with an attack of one of her sad long illnesses, which deprive me of her society, though not of her domestication, for eight or nine weeks together. I see her, but it does her no good. But for this, we have the snuggest, most comfortable house, with everything most compact and desirable. Colebrook is a wilderness. The books, prints, &c., are come here, and the New River came down with us. The familiar prints, the bust, the Milton, seem scarce to have changed their rooms. One of her last observations was 'how frightfully like this room is to our room in Islington,' — our up-stairs room, she meant. How I hope you will come some better day, and judge of it! We have tried quiet here for four months, and I will answer for the comfort of it enduring.

"On emptying my bookshelves I found an 'Ulysses,' which I will send to A. K. when I go to town, for her acceptance — unless the book be out of print. One likes to have one copy of everything one does. I neglected to keep one of 'Poetry for Children,' the joint production of Mary and me, and it is not to be

had for love or money. It had in the title-page 'by the Author of Mrs. Lester's School.' Know you any one that has it, and would exchange it?

"Strolling to Waltham Cross the other day, I hit off these lines. It is one of the Crosses which Edward I. caused to be built for his wife at every town where her corpse rested between Northamptonshire and London.

> "A stately cross each sad spot doth attest
> Whereat the corpse of Eleanor did rest,
> From Herdby fetch'd — her spouse so honor'd her —
> To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.
> And, if less pompous obsequies were thine,
> Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline,
> Grudge not, great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses:
> Thou in thy lifetime had'st thy share of crosses.

"My dear B. B.

"My head aches with this little excursion.

"Pray accept two sides for three for once,

"And believe me

"Yours sadly,

"C. L."

"Chase Side, Enfield."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B., — We are all pretty well again and comfortable, and I take a first opportunity of sending the 'Adventures of Ulysses,' hoping that among us — Homer, Chapman, and Co. — we shall afford you some pleasure. I fear it is out of print; if not, A. K. will accept it, with wishes it were bigger; if another copy is not to be had, it reverts to me and my heirs *forever*. With it I send a trumpery book; to which,

without my knowledge, the editor of the Bijoux has contributed Lucy's verses; I am asham'd to ask her acceptance of the trash accompanying it. Adieu to Albums — for a great while — I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days, but my landlord's daughter (not at the Pot house) requested me to write in her female friends', and in her own; if I go to ——, thou art there also, O all-pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia! C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B. B., — A gentleman I never saw before brought me your welcome present, — imagine a scraping, fiddling, fidgeting, petit-maitre of a dancing-school advancing into my plain parlor with a coupee and a sideling bow, and presenting the book as if he had been handing a glass of lemonade to a young miss, — imagine this, and contrast it with the serious nature of the book presented! Then task your imagination, reversing this picture, to conceive of quite an opposite messenger, a lean, strait-locked, whey-faced Methodist, for such was he in reality who brought it, the Genius (it seems) of the 'Wesleyan Magazine.' Certes, friend B., thy 'Widow's Tale' is too horrible, spite of the lenitives of Religion, to embody in verse; I hold prose to be the appropriate expositor of such atrocities! No offence, but it is a cordial that makes the heart sick. Still thy skill in compounding it I do not deny. I turn

to what gave me less mingled pleasure. I find mark'd with pencil these pages in thy pretty book, and fear I have been penurious.

"Page 52, 53 — Capital.
" 59 — 6th stanza, exquisite simile.
" 61 — 11th stanza, equally good.
" 108 — 3rd stanza, I long to see Van Balen.
" 111 — A downright good sonnet. *Dixi.*
" 153 — Lines at the bottom.

So you see, I read, hear, and *mark*, if I don't learn. In short this little volume is no discredit to any of your former, and betrays none of the senility you fear about. — Apropos of Van Balen, an artist who painted me lately, had painted a blackamoor praying, and not filling his canvas, stuffed in his little girl aside of blackey, gaping at him unmeaningly; and then didn't know what to call it. Now for a picture to be promoted to the Exhibition (Suffolk Street) as *Historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christen it the 'Young Catechist' and furbish'd it with dialogue following, which dubb'd it an Historical Painting. Nothing to a friend at need.

"While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
Painter, who is she that stayeth
By, with skin of whitest lustre;
Sunny locks, a shining cluster;
Saint-like seeming to direct him
To the Power that must protect him?
Is she of the heav'n-born Three,
Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?
Or some Cherub?
They you mention
Far transcend my weak invention.

'Tis a simple Christian child,
Missionary young and mild,
From her store of script'ral knowledge,
(Bible-taught, without a college)
Which by reading she could gather,
Teaches him to say Our Father
To the common Parent, who
Color not respects, nor hue.
White and black in him have part,
Who looks not to the skin, but heart.

When I'd done it, the artist (who had clapt in Miss merely as a fill-space) swore I exprest his full meaning, and the damosel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures; seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful lignum mortis. By the by, is the widow likely to marry again?

"I am giving the fruit of my old play reading at the Museum to Hone, who sets forth a portion weekly in the 'Table Book.' Do you see it? How is Mitford? — I'll just hint that the pitcher, the cord and the bowl are a little too often repeated (passim) in your book, and that in page 17, last line but 4, *him* is put for *he*, but the poor widow I take it had small leisure for grammatical niceties. Don't you see there's *he*, *myself*, and *him*; why not both *him?* likewise *imperviously* is cruelly spelt *imperiously*. These are trifles, and I honestly like your book and you for giving it, though I really am ashamed of so many presents. I can think of no news, therefore I will end with mine and Mary's kindest remembrances to you and yours, C. L."

While Lamb was residing at Enfield, the friendship which, in 1824, he had formed with Mr. Moxon, led to very frequent intercourse, destined, in after years, to

be rendered habitual, by the marriage of his friend with the young lady whom he regarded almost as a daughter. In 1828 Mr. Moxon, at the request of Mr. Hurst, of the firm of Hurst, Chance, and Co., applied to Lamb to supply an article for the "Keepsake," which he, always disliking the flimsy elegancies of the Annuals — sadly opposed to his own exclusive taste for old, standard, moth-eaten books — thus declined: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"March 19th, 1828.

"My dear M. — It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with 'Forget-me-Nots;' — pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has, if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday; besides that Emma has decided objections to her own and her friends' Album verses being published; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

"Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.*

"C. L."

The following introduced Mr. Patmore to Mr. Moxon: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"May 3rd, 1828.

"Dear M. — My friend Patmore, author of the 'Months,' a very pretty publication — of sundry

* The great dog, which was, at one time, the constant companion of his long walks.

Essays in the 'London,' 'New Monthly,' &c., wants to dispose of a volume or two of 'Tales.' Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; be that as it may, he will call upon you, *under favor of my recommendation;* and as he is returning to France, where he lives, if you can do anything for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I'd never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty friendly good fellow — and was poor John Scott's second, as I will be yours when you want one. May you never be mine!

"Yours truly, C. L."

"Enfield."

The following letter exemplifies some of the most remarkable peculiarities of thought and intellectual sentiment which streaked, without darkening, Lamb's evening of life.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 25th, 1829.

"Dear B. B., — I have just come from Town, where I have been to get my bit of quarterly pension. And have brought home, from stalls in Barbican, the old 'Pilgrim's Progress,' with the prints — Vanity Fair, &c. — now scarce. Four shillings. Cheap. And also one of whom I have oft heard and had dreams, but never saw in the flesh — that is in sheepskin — The whole theologic works of

Thomas Aquinas!'

My arms ached with lugging it a mile to the stage, but the burden was a pleasure, such as old Anchises was to the shoulders of Æneas — or the Lady to the Lover in old romance, who having to carry her to the top of a high mountain — the price of obtaining her — clambered with her to the top, and fell dead with fatigue.

'O, the glorious old Schoolmen!'

There must be something in him. Such great names imply greatness. Who hath seen Michael Angelo's things — of us that never pilgrimaged to Rome — and yet which of us disbelieves his greatness? How I will revel in his cobwebs and subtleties, till my brain spins!

"N. B. I have writ in the old Hamlet — offer it to Mitford in my name, if he have not seen it. 'Tis wofully below our editions of it. But keep it, if you like.

"I do not mean this to go for a letter, only to apprise you, that the parcel is booked for you this 25th March, 1829, from the Four Swans, Bishopsgate. With both our loves to Lucy and A. K.,

"Yours ever, C. L."

The following notes, undated, but of about 1829, were addressed to Coleridge, under the genial care of Mr. Gilman at Highgate: —

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C. — Your sonnet is capital. The paper ingenious,* only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper, *manufactured of rags*, for

* Some gauzy tissue paper on which the sonnet was copied.

better preservation. I never knew before how the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

"On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

"With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

"Yours ever, C. LAMB."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"My dear Coleridge, — With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two, forbids my rest, and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents me coming. I expect —— and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gilmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet.

"Yours (though shattered),

"C. LAMB."

"Tuesday."

The next two *notelets* are addressed to Coleridge's

excellent host, on the occasion of borrowing and returning the works of Fuller: —

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Pray trust me with the 'Church History,' as well as the 'Worthies.' A moon shall restore both. Also give me back 'Him of Aquinum.' In return you have the *light of my countenance.** Adieu.

"P. S. A sister also of mine comes with it. A son of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedecish, hot, phaetontic. From my country lodgings at Enfield. C. L."

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Dear Gilman, — Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the winter has used you all.

"It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate; for beds we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full; tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate, there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gilman, &c.,

"Yours, mopish but in health,

"C. LAMB."

* A sketch of Lamb, by an amateur artist.

"I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival."

The following two letters, addressed to Mr. H. C. Robinson, when afflicted with rheumatism, are in Lamb's wildest strain of mirth. In the first, he pretends to endure all the pain he believes his friend to be suffering, and attributes it to his own incautious habits; in the second, he attributes the suffering to his friend in a strain of exaggeration, probably intended to make the reality more tolerable by comparison: —

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"April 10th, 1829.

"Dear Robinson, — We are afraid you will slip from us from England without again seeing us. It would be charity to come and see me. I have these three days been laid up with strong rheumatic pains, in loins, back, shoulders. I shriek sometimes from the violence of them. I get scarce any sleep, and the consequence is, I am restless, and want to change sides as I lie, and I cannot turn without resting on my hands, and so turning all my body all at once, like a log with a lever. While this rainy weather lasts, I have no hope of alleviation. I have tried flannels and embrocation in vain. Just at the hip joint the pangs sometimes are so excruciating, that I cry out. It is as violent as the cramp, and far more continuous. I am ashamed to whine about these complaints to you, who can ill enter into them; but indeed they are sharp. You go about in rain or fine, at all hours, without discommodity. I envy you your immunity

at a time of life not much removed from my own. But you owe your exemption to temperance, which it is too late for me to pursue. I, in my lifetime, have had my good things. Hence my frame is brittle — your's strong as brass. I never knew any ailment you had. You can go out at night in all weathers, sit up all hours. Well, I don't want to moralize, I only wish to say that if you are inclined to a game at double-dumby, I would try and bolster up myself in a chair for a rubber or so. My days are tedious, but less so, and less painful than my nights. May you never know the pain and difficulty I have in writing so much! Mary, who is most kind, joins in the wish!

"C. LAMB."

THE COMPANION LETTER TO THE SAME.

(A WEEK AFTERWARDS.)

"I do confess to mischief. It was the subtlest diabolical piece of malice heart of man has contrived. I have no more rheumatism than that poker. Never was freer from all pains and aches. Every joint sound, to the tip of the ear from the extremity of the lesser toe. The report of thy torments was blown circuitously here from Bury. I could not resist the jeer. I conceived you writhing, when you should just receive my congratulations. How mad you'd be. Well, it is not in my method to inflict pangs. I leave that to Heaven. But in the existing pangs of a friend I have a share. His disquietude crowns my exemption. I imagine you howling, and pace across the room, shooting out my free arms, legs, &c., /\/\/ this way and that way, with an assurance of not kindling a spark of

pain from them. I deny that Nature meant us to sympathize with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce — not so pleasant to the actor, indeed; but Grimaldi cries when we laugh, and 'tis but one that suffers to make thousands rejoice.

"You say that shampooing is ineffectual. But, *per se*, it is good, to show the introvolutions, extravolutions, of which the animal frame is capable — to show what the creature is receptible of, short of dissolution.

"You are worst of nights, an't you? You never was rack'd, was you? I should like an authentic map of those feelings.

"You seem to have the flying gout. You can scarcely screw a smile out of your face, can you? I sit at immunity and sneer *ad libitum*. 'Tis now the time for you to make good resolutions. I may go on breaking 'em for anything the worse I find myself. Your doctor seems to keep you on the long cure. Precipitate healings are never good. Don't come while you are so bad; I shan't be able to attend to your throes and the dumby at once. I should like to know how slowly the pain goes off. But don't write, unless the motion will be likely to make your sensibility more exquisite.

"Your affectionate and truly healthy friend,

"C. LAMB."

"Mary thought a letter from me might amuse you in your torment."

The illness of Mr. Barton's daughter drew from Lamb the following expression of kindred loneliness and sorrow: —

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 3rd, 1829.

"Dear B. B., — I am very much grieved indeed for the indisposition of poor Lucy. Your letter found me in domestic troubles. My sister is again taken ill, and I am obliged to remove her out of the house for many weeks, I fear, before I can hope to have her again. I have been very desolate indeed. My loneliness is a little abated by our young friend Emma having just come here for her holidays, and a schoolfellow of hers that was, with her. Still the house is not the same, tho' she is the same. Mary had been pleasing herself with the prospect of seeing her at this time; and with all their company, the house feels at times a frightful solitude. May you and I in no very long time have a more cheerful theme to write about, and congratulate upon a daughter's and a sister's perfect recovery. Do not be long without telling me how Lucy goes on. I have a right to call her by her quaker-name, you know. Emma knows that I am writing to you, and begs to be remembered to you with thankfulness for your ready contribution. Her album is filling apace. But of her contributors one, almost the flower of it, a most amiable young man and late acquaintance of mine, has been carried off by consumption, on return from one of the Azores islands, to which he went with hopes of mastering the disease, came back improved, went back to a most close and confined counting-house, and relapsed. His name was Dibdin, grandson of the Songster.

"C. L."

The following graphic sketch of the happy temper-

ament of one of Lamb's intimate friends, now no more, is contained in a letter to

MR. WORDSWORTH.

"A—— is well, and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he, and those of his constitution, keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or, have they any? Or, are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way, in a wantonness of provocation; and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself, like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture; tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it; and I to pay the reckoning, till my mouth is as hot as brimstone; and I'd venture the roof of my mouth, that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happiness'd friend is picking his crackers, that not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and, having performed them, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or could have his house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos.

* * * * * *

"Have you seen a curious letter in the 'Morning Chronicle,' by C. L.,* the genius of absurdity, respect-

* Capel Lofft, a barrister residing in Suffolk, a well-known whig and

ing Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus? That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences."

In the spring of the year, Mr. Murray, the eminent publisher, through one of Lamb's oldest and most cherished friends, Mr. Ayrton, proposed that he should undertake a continuation of his 'Specimens of the Old English Dramatists.' The proposal was communicated by Mr. Ayrton to Lamb, then at Enfield, and then too painfully anxious for the recovery of Miss Isola, who was dangerously ill in Suffolk, to make the arrangement desired. The following is the reply:—

TO MR. AYRTON.

"Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield,
"14th March, 1830.

"My dear Ayrton,—Your letter, which was only not so pleasant as your appearance would have been, has revived some old images; Phillips,* (not the Colo-

friend of Major Wyvil and Major Cartwright, who sometimes half vexed Lamb by signing, as he had a right, their common initials to a sonnet. He wrote a very vehement letter, contending that the detention of Napoleon on board a vessel off the coast, preparatory to his being sent to St. Helena, was illegal, and that the captain of the vessel would be compelled to surrender him in obedience to a writ of Habeas Corpus.

* Edward Phillips, Esq., Secretary to the Right Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. The "Colonel" alluded to was the Lieutenant of Marines who accompanied Capt. Cook in his last voyage and on shore with that great man when he fell a victim to his humanity. On the death of his commander, Lieutenant Phillips, himself wounded, swam off to the boats; but seeing one of his marines struggling in the water to escape the natives who were pursuing him, gallantly swam back, protected his man at the peril of his own life, and both reached their boat in safety. He afterwards married that accomplished and amiable daughter of Dr. Burney, whose name so frequently occurs in the Diary and Correspondence of her sister, Madame d'Arblay.

nel,) with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible; the old Captain's significant nod over the right shoulder* (was it not?); Mrs. B——'s determined questioning of the score, after the game was absolutely gone to the d—l; the plain but hospitable cold boiled-beef suppers at sideboard; all which fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful spirits, come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.

"You imagine a deep gulf between you and us; and there is a pitiable hiatus in *kind* between St. James's Park and this extremity of Middlesex. But the mere distance in turnpike roads is a trifle. The roof of a coach swings you down in an hour or two. We have a sure hot joint on a Sunday, and when had we better? I suppose you know that ill health has obliged us to give up housekeeping, but we have an asylum at the very next door — only twenty-four inches further from town, which is not material in a country expedition — where a *table d'hôte* is kept for us, without trouble on our parts, and we adjourn after dinner, when one of the old world (old friends) drops casually down among us. Come and find us out: and seal our judicious change with your approbation, whenever the whim bites, or the sun prompts. No need of announcement, for we are sure to be at home.

"I keep putting off the subject of my answer. In truth I am not in spirits at present to see Mr. Murray on such a business; but pray offer him my acknowledgments, and an assurance that I should like at least one of his propositions, as I have so much additional matter for the SPECIMENS, as might make two volumes

* Captain (afterwards Admiral) James Burney.

in all; or ONE (new edition) omitting such better known authors as Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, &c.

"But we are both in trouble at present. A very dear young friend of ours, who passed her Christmas holidays here, has been taken dangerously ill with a fever, from which she is very precariously recovering, and I expect a summons to fetch her when she is well enough to bear the journey from Bury. It is Emma Isola, with whom we got acquainted at our first visit to your sister at Cambridge, and she has been an occasional inmate with us — and of late years much more frequently — ever since. While she is in this danger, and till she is out of it, and here, in a probable way to recovery, I feel that I have no spirits for an engagement of any kind. It has been a terrible shock to us; therefore I beg that you will make my handsomest excuses to Mr. Murray.

"Our very kindest loves to Mrs. A. and the younger A.'s. Your unforgotten

"C. LAMB."

Good tidings soon reached Lamb of Miss Isola's health, and he went to Fornham to bring her, for a month's visit, to Enfield. The following are portions of letters addressed to the lady from whose care he had removed her, after their arrival at home, other parts of which have been already published.

TO MRS. WILLIAMS.

"Enfield, April 2nd, 1830.

"Dear Madam, — I have great pleasure in letting you know Miss Isola has suffered very little from

fatigue on her long journey; I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two. But I am a very unpractised traveller. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six.

"How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an 'Acrostic in a cross-road,' and which I wish were worthier of the lady they refer to, but I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a lady's good *name*. Your candor must acknowledge that they are written straight. And now, dear madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I found at Fornham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good master of the family at Fornham, though heartily I should have rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Fornham that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged person.

* * * * * *

"Miss Isola is writing, and will tell you that we are going on very comfortably. Her sister is just come. She blames my last verses, as being more written on Mr. Williams than on yourself; but how should I have

parted whom a Superior Power has brought together? I beg you will jointly accept of all our best respects, and pardon your obsequious if not troublesome correspondent, C. L.

"P. S. — I am the worst folder-up of a letter in the world, except certain Hottentots, in the land of Caffre, who never fold up their letters at all, writing very badly upon skins, &c."

The following contains Lamb's account of the same journey addressed to Buxton: —

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"May 24th, 1830.

"Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb is quite well.

"Dear Sarah, — I found my way to Northaw on Thursday, and saw a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady. I did not accept her offered glass of wine (home-made, I take it), but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold lamb, from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlor, and proceeded for Berkhampstead, &c.; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis. I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came, and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

"Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and said, 'Now, pray, don't *drink;* do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield, you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it.' How I behaved you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have 'no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence.' Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield.* We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage-coach, that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: 'What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?' Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that 'it depended, I believed, upon boiled legs of mutton.' This clinched our conversation, and my gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the re-

* This little anecdote was told by Lamb in a letter previously published, but not quite so richly as here.

mainder of the journey. S—— was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit, and a most pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom. N. Y——* is as good, and as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word 'heir,' which I contended was pronounced like 'air;' he said that it might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the 'Heir-at-Law,' a comedy; but that in the law courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *hayer;* he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he 'would consult Serjeant Wilde,' who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water; sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil's 'Æneid' all through with me (which he did), because a counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because Biblical quotations are very emphatic in a court of justice. A third time, he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favoredly, because 'we did not know how indispensable it was for a barrister to do all those sort of things well! Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed.' So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it. With a long head, but somewhat a wrong one — harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one: maybe, he has tired him out.

"I am with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile, you might like a letter. Commend me to all the

* A very old and dear friend of Lamb who had just been called to the bar.

wonders in Derbyshire, and tell the devil I humbly kiss — my hand to him.

"Yours ever, C. LAMB."

"Enfield, *Saturday.*"

The esteem which Lamb had always cherished for Mr. Rogers, was quickened into a livelier feeling by the generous interest which the poet took in the success of Mr. Moxon, who was starting as a publisher. The following little note shows the state of his feelings at this time towards two distinguished persons.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Enfield, *Tuesday.*"

"Dear M., — I dined with your and my Rogers, at Mr. Cary's, yesterday. Cary consulted me on the proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to. I said I would write to *you.* But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante, at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behavior to you, and you are already no stranger. Go! I made Rogers laugh about your 'Nightingale Sonnet,' not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly. C. L."

The petty criticisms on the small volume of "Album Verses," by which a genial trifle, intended to mark the commencement of the career of a dear friend, was subjected to absurd severity, and which called forth a little indignant poem from the Laureate, provoked the following notice from Lamb, in a letter addressed

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 30, 1830.

"Dear B. B., — My address is 34, Southampton Buildings, Holborn. For God's sake do not let me be pestered with annuals. They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who write in them. I am still alone, and very much out of sorts, and cannot spur up my mind to writing. The sight of one of those year-books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy.

"Thank you for your warm interest about my little volume, for the critics on which I care the five hundred thousandth part of the tythe of a half-farthing. I am too old a Militant for that. How noble, though, in R. S.,* to come forward for an old friend, who had treated him so unworthily.

"Moxon has a shop without customers, I a book without readers. But what a clamor against a poor collection of Album verses, as if we had put forth an Epic. I cannot scribble a long letter — I am, when not at foot, very desolate, and take no interest in anything, scarce hate anything, but Annuals. I am in an interregnum of thought and feeling. What a beautiful autumn morning this is, if it was but with me as in times past when the candle of the Lord shined round me. I cannot even muster enthusiasm to admire the French heroism. In better times I hope we may some day meet, and discuss an old poem or two. But if you'd have me not sick, no more of Annuals.

"C. L., Ex-Elia.

"Love to Lucy and A. K. always."

* Robert Southey.

In 1830, Lamb tried the experiment of lodging a little while in London; but Miss Lamb's malady compelled him to return to the solitude of Enfield. He thus communicates the sad state of his sister: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"Dear Moxon, — I have brought my sister to Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of recovery in London. Her state of mind is deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of anything in the world out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write, or receive a letter in her presence; every little talk so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

"Pray assure Southey of my kindliest feelings towards him, and, if you do not see him, send this to him.

"Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever yours, C. Lamb.

"Remember me kindly to the Allsops."

The following curious piece of modern Latin was addressed

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"April, 1831.

"Vir Bone! — Recepi literas tuas amicissimas, et in mentem venit responsuro mihi, vel raro, vel nunquam,

inter nos intercedisse Latinam linguam, organum rescribendi, loquendive. Epistolæ tuæ, Plinianis elegantiis (supra quod TREMULO deceat) refertæ, tam a verbis Plinianis adeo abhorrent, ut ne vocem quamquam (Romanam scilicet) habere videaris, quam 'ad canem,' ut aiunt, 'rejectare possis.' Forsan desuetudo Latinissandi ad vernaculam linguam usitandam, plusquam opus sit, coegit. Per adagia quædam nota, et in ore omnium pervulgata, ad Latinitatis perditæ recuperationem revocare te institui.

"Felis in abaco est, et ægrè videt.

"Omne quod splendet nequaquam aurum putes.

"Imponas equo mendicum, equitabit idem ad diabolum.

"Fur commodè a fure prenditur.

"O MARIA, MARIA, valdè CONTRARIA, quomodo crescit hortulus tuus?

"Nunc majora canamus.

"Thomas, Thomas, de Islington, uxorem duxit die nuperâ Dominicâ. Reduxit domum posterâ. Succedenti baculum emit. Postridie ferit illam. Ægrescit illa subsequenti. Proximâ (nempe Veneris) est mortua. Plurimum gestiit Thomas, quòd appropinquanti Sabbato efferenda sit.

"Horner quidam Johannulus in angulo sedebat, artocreas quasdam deglutiens. Inseruit pollices, pruna nana evellens, et magnâ voce exclamavit 'Dii boni, quàm bonus puer fio!'

"Diddle-diddle-dumkins! meus unicus filius Johannes cubitum ivit, integris braccis, caligâ unâ tantùm, indutus. Diddle-diddle, &c. DA CAPO.

"Hic adsum saltans Joannula. Cum nemo adsit mihi, semper resto sola.

"Ænigma mihi hoc solvas, et Œdipus fies.

"Quâ ratione assimilandus sit equus TREMULO?

"Quippe cui tota communicatio sit per HAY et NEIGH, juxta consilium illud Dominicum, 'Fiat omnis communicatio vestra YEA et NAY.'

"In his nugis caram diem consumo, dum invigilo valetudini carioris nostræ Emmæ, quæ apud nos jamdudum ægrotat. Salvere vos jubet mecum Maria mea, ipsa integrâ valetudine. ELIA.

"Ab agro Enfeldiense datum, Aprilis nescio quibus Calendis — Davus sum, non Calendarius.

"P. S. — Perdita in toto est Billa Reformatura."

Mr. Moxon, having become the publisher of "The Englishman's Magazine," obtained Lamb's aid, as a contributor of miscellaneous articles, which were arranged to appear under the comprehensive title of "Peter's Net." The following accompanied his first contribution, in which some reminiscences of the Royal Academy were enshrined.

TO MR. MOXON.

"August, 1831.

"Dear M., — The *R. A.* here memorized was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could you get hold of

Procter? — his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montague's; or of Janus Weathercock? both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The 'Peter's Net' does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening 'Elia' at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters, addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man, Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose, till the magazine comes out; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon and take a bed? The 'Athenæum' has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in 'Hone's Book.' I like your first number capitally. But is not it small? Come and see us, week-day if possible.

"Send, or bring me, Hone's number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D., are substantially true; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates?

"The poem I mean, is in 'Hone's Book,' as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it; but 'tis a poem I envy — *that* and Montgomery's 'Last Man;' I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them. C. L."

The following contains Lamb's characteristic acknowledgment of a payment on account of these contributions.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Sept. 5th, 1831.

"Dear M., — Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the moneys in trust, till I see you fairly over the next 1st January. Then I shall look upon 'em as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the 10*l.*, tho' you may grin) than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

"Yours, very faithfully, C. L."

The magazine, although enriched with Lamb's articles, and some others of great merit, did not meet with a success so rapid as to requite the proprietor for the labor and anxiety of its production. The following is Lamb's letter, in reply to one announcing a determination to discontinue its publication: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"Oct. 24th, 1831.

"To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him; to withhold 'em is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honors, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation, in a letter, which, without flattery, would have made an

'ARTICLE,' and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved, comfort me a little. Will it please, or plague you, to say that when your parcel came I cursed it, for my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous description of a Landscape of an R. A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day you gave me? Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving to the apprehensions of the whole body of R. A.'s; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

"To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which as —— less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it, (who does not?) you feel awkward at retaking it, (who ought not?) — is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under 10*l.*, by and by, accruing to me — *Devil's Money;** (you are sanguine, say 7*l.* 10*s.*); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it, and, 'by him I will I not name,' won't touch a penny of it. That will split your loss, one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

"The Rev. Mr. ——, whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull?*) never sent me any book on

* Alluding to a little extravagance of Lamb's — scarcely worth recollecting — in emulation of the "Devil's Walk" of Southey and Co.

Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me, to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why I am as old a one Goddite as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication would bring over the Methodists over the way here? * However, I'll give it to the pew-opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, for to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will light his pipe with it.

"I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you, individually, I will just hint that a dropping-in to tea, unlooked for, about five, stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

"P. S. — The second volume of 'Elia' is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, 'tis a unique!

"If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By the by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed things monthly, it seemed a labor above Hercules' 'Twelve' in a year, which were evidently monthly

* Referring to a chapel opposite his lodging at Enfield.

contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thousand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both!

"Your ex-Lampoonist, or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or 'last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted.'"

The following was addressed soon after,

TO MR. MOXON.

"Feb. 1832.

"Dear Moxon, — The snows are ankle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the '*Life*,' which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two, at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors. I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, G. published the 'Poet's Fate,' in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers, but Mr. R., not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But G. has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard him once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel. As the devil would have it, a man they call Barker, in his 'Parriana' has quoted the identical two lines, as they stood in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of

poor G. are again wrung. His letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been labored out at six sittings. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irregular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted into, is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. R. some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear old face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront — a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. R.: 'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture! It should go into the Museum.

"Come when the weather will possibly let you; I want to see the Wordsworths, but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they came down, and but a sort of a house to receive them in; yet I shall regret their departure unseen; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they?

"We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

"You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall; I do not know

what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now then: there are left at Miss Buffon's, the 'Tales of the Castle,' and certain volumes of the 'Retrospective Review.' The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground-floor, east side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched; it is quite an effort to write this. So, with the '*Life*,' I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows it would be impossible to expect you, but do not let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

"Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fine-ish weather, when she'll venture.

"Remember us to Allsop, and all the dead people; to whom, and to London, we seem dead."

In February, 1833, the following letter was addressed by Lamb to the editor, on his being made Serjeant:—

TO MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

"My dear T.,—Now cannot I call him *Serjeant;* what is there in a coif? Those canvas-sleeves protective from ink,* when he was a law-chit—a *Chitty*-ling, (let the leathern apron be apocryphal) do more

* Mr. Lamb always insisted that the costume referred to was worn when he first gladdened his young friend by a call at Mr. Chitty's Chambers. I am afraid it is all apocryphal.

'specially plead to the Jury Court, of old memory. The costume (will he agnize it?) was as of a desk-fellow, or Socius Plutei. Methought I spied a brother!

"That familiarity is extinct forever. Curse me if I can call him Mr. Serjeant — except, mark me, in *company*. Honor where honor is due; but should he ever visit us, (do you think he ever will, Mary?) what a distinction should I keep up between him and our less fortunate friend, H. C. R.! Decent respect shall always be the Crabb's — but, somehow, short of reverence.

"Well, of my old friends, I have lived to see two knighted, one made a judge, another in a fair way to it. Why am I restive? why stands my sun upon Gibeah?

"Variously, my dear Mrs. Talfourd, [I can be more familiar with her!] *Mrs. Serjeant Talfourd*, — my sister prompts me — (these ladies stand upon ceremonies) — has the congratulable news affected the members of our small community. Mary comprehended it at once, and entered into it heartily. Mrs. W—— was, as usual, perverse; wouldn't, or couldn't, understand it. A Serjeant? She thought Mr. T. was in the law. Didn't know that he ever 'listed.

"Emma alone truly sympathized. *She* had a silk gown come home that very day, and has precedence before her learned sisters accordingly.

"We are going to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Serjeant, with all the young serjeantry — and that is all that I can see that I shall get by the promotion.

"Valete, et mementote amici quondam vestri humillimi, C. L."

The following note to Mr. Moxon, on some long forgotten occasion of momentary displeasure, the nature and object of which is uncertain, — contains a fantastical exaggeration of anger, which, judged by those who knew the writer, will only illustrate the entire absence of all the bad passions of hatred and contempt it feigns.

TO MR. MOXON.

"1833.

"Dear M., — Many thanks for the books; but most thanks for one immortal sentence: 'If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again.' I do not know whether to admire most, the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation, by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. Keep your hands from picking and stealing, is noways referable to his acquists. I doubt whether bearing false witness against thy neighbor at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation! — unworthy to have seen Moses behind! — to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia! Has the irreverent art-toucher been struck blind, I wonder? The more I think of him, the less I think of him. His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral

eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas! The great BEAST! The beggarly NIT!

"More when we meet; mind, you'll come, two of you; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dishallowed by descending so low? Amen. Maledicatur in extremis! C. L."

In the spring of 1833, Lamb made his last removal from Enfield to Edmonton. He was about to lose the society of Miss Isola, on the eve of marriage, and determined to live altogether with his sister, whether in her sanity or her madness. This change was announced in the following letter

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"End of May nearly.

"Dear Wordsworth, — Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing. Nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration, — shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's, and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us

only. They have had the care of her before. I see little of her, alas! I too often hear her. Sunt lachrymæ rerum! and you and I must bear it.

"To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the 'youth of our house,' Emma Isola. I have her here now for a little while, but she is too nervous, properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits, — be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is to be wedded to Moxon, at the end of August — so 'perish the roses and the flowers' — how is it?

"Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from Enfield. I am with attentive people, and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I will avail myself. I have few friends left there, one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though of the latter, there should be not one known one remaining.

"Thank you for your cordial reception of 'Elia.' Inter nos, the 'Ariadne' is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustrative.

"I want you in the 'Popular Fallacies'* to like the 'Home that is no home,' and 'Rising with the lark.'

"I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can't read much in summer time.

* A series of articles contributed, under this title, by Lamb to the 'New Monthly Magazine."

"With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy,

"I remain most affectionately yours,

"C. LAMB.

"At Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton, Middlesex.

"Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON, (will you pardon me?*) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop."

On the approach of the wedding-day, fixed for 30th July, Lamb turned to the account of a half-tearful merriment, the gift of a watch to the young lady whom he was about to lose.

TO MR. MOXON.

"July 24th, 1833.

"For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, 'Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?' and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see 'what the time is.' I overheard her whis-

* It had been proposed by Lamb that Mr. W. should be the possessor of the portrait if he outlived his friend, and that afterwards it was to be bequeathed to Christ's College, Cambridge.

pering, 'Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow.' This little present of Time! — why, — 'tis Eternity to her!

"What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

"She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away 'half-past twelve,' which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

"Well, if 'love me, love my watch,' answers, she will keep time to you.

"It goes right by the Horse Guards.

"Dearest M., — Never mind opposite* nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously. Your *ever* *Elia.*

"We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

"Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch."

Miss Lamb was in the sad state of mental estrangement up to the day of the wedding; but then in the constant companionship of her brother at Edmonton. The following cluster of little letters to the new married pair — the first from Charles, introducing one from Mary — shows the happy effect of the news on her mental health.

* Written on the opposite page to that in which the previous affectionate banter appears.

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON.

"August, 1833.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon, — Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. 'I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes,' she says; but you shall see it.

"Dear Moxon, — I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

"I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer, into the little time after dinner, before post-time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

"Yours, C. L."

"I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans *half as sober as a judge.* I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now."

The turn of the leaf presented the following from Miss Lamb: —

"My dear Emma and Edward Moxon, — Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain, was cleared up on the wedding-day by Mrs. W.* taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me

* The wife of the landlord of the house at Edmonton.

from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart. MARY LAMB."

At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles: —

"Wednesday.

"Dears, again, — Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to WRIGHT'S and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

"C. L.

"Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words, undictated."

Lamb's latter days were brightened by the frequent — latterly periodical — hospitality of the admirable translator of Dante, at the British Museum. The following was addressed to this new friend lately acquired, but who became an old friend at once, while Mr. and Mrs. Moxon were on their wedding tour: —

TO REV. H. F. CARY.

"Sept. 9th, 1833.

"Dear Sir, — Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is flaunting it about *à la Parisienne*, with his new bride, our Emma, much to his satisfaction, and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you

return from Worcestershire, and most, most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here, or anywhere.

"I will take my time with Darley's act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the English typography.

"Yours, most truly, C. LAMB.

"P. S. — Pray let me know when you return. We are at Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the 'Inferno,' by the blessed furtherance of your polar-star translation. I think we scarce left anything unmadeout. But our partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your 'Dante' and Sandys' 'Ovid' are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

"Fairfax's 'Tasso' is no translation at all. It's better in some places, but it merely observes the number of stanzas; as for images, similes, &c., he finds 'em himself, and never 'troubles Peter for the matter.'

"In haste, dear Cary, yours ever, C. LAMB.

"Has M. sent you 'Elia,' second volume? if not he shall."

Miss Lamb did not escape all the cares of housekeeping by the new arrangement; the following little note shows the grotesque uses to which Lamb turned the smaller household anxieties: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"1833.

"Dear M., — Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child, who, sleeping or not sleeping, next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age! We propose, when you and E. agree on the time, to come up and meet you at the B——'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

"Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy in your happiness. C. L.

"Our old and ever loves to dear Emma."

The following is Lamb's reply to a welcome communication of Sonnets, addressed by the bridegroom to the fair object of Lamb's regard — beautiful in themselves — and endeared to Lamb by honored memories and generous hopes: —

TO MR. MOXON.

"Nov. 29th, 1833.

"Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these Sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty! I have only allowed myself to transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be from any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four

lines in the room of the four last. Read 'Darby and Joan,' in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation!) before the dark days shall come, in which ye shall say 'there is small comfort in them.' You have begun a sort of character of Emma in them, very sweetly; carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

"I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be hanged if I furnish a line towards it. So much for that. The next best is to the Ocean.

> 'Ye gallant winds, if e'er your LUSTY CHEEKS
> Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,
> O, puff your loudest, spread the canvas wide,'

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

"Perhaps, 'O Ocean' (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels, which Pope objects to. 'Great Ocean!' is obvious. To save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble Sonnet. 'St. Cloud' I have no fault to find with.

"If I return the Sonnets, think it no disrespect, for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice 'em earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was

marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental cogitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour Street, &c., when, diabolically, I was interrupted by

Heigh-ho!
Little Barrow! —

Emma knows him — and prevailed on to spend the day at his sister's, where was an album, and (O, march of intellect!) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles' play, which, epilogued by me, lay on the PIANO, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home, I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

'Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,'

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them all next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris! Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you could come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you? Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on Mary's birthday. Love to the whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so, from her loving uncle, as she has let me call myself. I bought a fine embossed card yesterday, and wrote for the Pawnbrokeress's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forget the rest

— but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband) : —

'May your fame,
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name!'

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E."

The following is Lamb's letter of acknowledgment to the author of the "Pleasures of Memory," for an early copy of his "Illustrated Poems," of a share in the publication of which, Mr. Moxon was "justly vain." The artistical allusions are to Stothard; the allusions to the poet's own kindnesses need no explanation to those who have been enabled by circumstances, which now and then transpire, to guess at the generous course of his life.

TO MR. ROGERS.

"Dec., 1833.

"My dear Sir, — Your book, by the unremitting punctuality of your publisher, has reached me thus early. I have not opened it, nor will till to-morrow, when I promise myself a thorough reading of it. The 'Pleasures of Memory' was the first school-present I made to Mrs. Moxon; it has those nice woodcuts, and I believe she keeps it still. Believe me, that all the kindness you have shown to the husband of that excellent person seems done unto myself. I have tried my hand at a sonnet in the 'Times.' But the turn I gave it, though I hoped it would not displease you, I thought might not be equally agreeable to your artist. I met

that dear old man at poor Henry's, with you, and again at Cary's, and it was sublime to see him sit, deaf, and enjoy all that was going on in mirth with the company. He reposed upon the many graceful, many fantastic images he had created; with them he dined, and took wine. I have ventured at an antagonist copy of verses, in the 'Athenæum,' to *him*, in which he is as everything, and you as nothing. He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides. But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of the theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? to have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakspeare, heavy-headed Romney's Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare (though he did the best in Lear), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of my, and everybody's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait! to confine the illimitable! I like you and Stothard (you best), but 'out upon this half-faced fellowship!' Sir, when I have read the book, I may trouble you, through Moxon, with some faint criticisms. It is not the flatteringest compliment in a letter to an author to say, you have not read his book yet. But the devil of a reader he must be, who prances through it in five minutes; and no longer have I received the parcel. It was a little tantalizing to me to receive a letter from Landor, *Gebir* Landor, from Florence, to say he was just sitting down to read my 'Elia,' just received; but the letter was to go out before the reading. There are calamities in authorship which only authors know. I am going to call on Moxon on Monday, if the throng of carriages in

Dover Street, on the morn of publication, do not barricade me out.

"With many thanks, and most respectful remembrances to your sister,

"Yours, C. LAMB.

"Have you seen Coleridge's happy exemplification in English of the Ovidian Elegiac metre?

> In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery current,
> In the Pentameter aye falling in melody down.

"My sister is papering up the book — careful soul!"

Lamb and his sister were now, for the last year of their united lives, always together. What his feelings were in this companionship, when his beloved associate was deprived of reason, will be seen in the following most affecting letter, to an old school-fellow and very dear friend of Mrs. Moxon's — since dead — who took an earnest interest in their welfare.

TO MISS FRYER.

"Feb. 14, 1884.

"Dear Miss Fryer, — Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover Street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me; I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her

rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally, lives again (every important thing, and every trifle) in her brain, with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission, all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp! and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read; such sweet religion in it, next to Woolman's! though the subject be baits, and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present, to do two more from.

"Very, very tired! I began this epistle, having been epistolizing all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanac learning, to know when spring pre-

cisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy of your acceptance as John Woolman. But 'tis a good-natured book."

A few days afterwards Lamb's passionate desire to serve a most deserving friend broke out in the following earnest little letter: —

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Church Street, Edmonton,
"February 22, 1834.

"Dear Wordsworth, — I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's creatures, I believe) is establishing a school at Carlisle; her name is L—— M——; her address 75, Castle Street, Carlisle; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and on her behavior I would stake my soul. O, if you can recommend her, how would I love you — if I could love you better! Pray, pray, recommend her. She is as good a human creature, — next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short, I may call her half dead to me. How good you are to me! Yours with fervor of friendship, forever, C. L.

"If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. L——'s sister (as good as she, she cannot be better though she tries) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsome annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock."

A quiet dinner at the British Museum with Mr. Cary once a month, to which Lamb looked forward with almost boyish eagerness, was now almost his only festival. In a little note to his host about this time, he hints at one of his few physical tastes. — "We are thinking," he says, "of roast *shoulder* of mutton with onion sauce, but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host." The following, after these festivities had been interrupted by Mr. Cary's visit to the Continent, is their last memorial: —

TO MR. CARY.

"Sept. 12, 1834.

"By Cot's plessing we will not be absence at the grace."

"Dear C., — We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelburg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish, and poignant Moselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen, not tasted any of these things.

"Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books and Bibliothecæ,

"C. and M. Lamb.

"I have only got your note just now *per negligentiam periniqui Moxoni.*"

The following little note has a mournful interest, as Lamb's last scrap of writing. It is dated on the very day on which erysipelas followed the accident, apparently trifling, which, five days after, terminated in his death. It is addressed to the wife of his oldest surviving friend: —

TO MRS. DYER.

"Dec. 22nd, 1834.

"Dear Mrs. Dyer, — I am very uneasy about a *Book* which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Buffam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called 'Phillip's Theatrum Poetarum,' but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlor. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church Street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

"With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

"Yours truly, C. LAMB."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

LAMB'S WEDNESDAY NIGHTS COMPARED WITH THE EVENINGS OF HOLLAND HOUSE — HIS DEAD COMPANIONS, DYER, GODWIN, THELWALL, HAZLITT, BARNES, HAYDON, COLERIDGE, AND OTHERS — LAST GLIMPSES OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB.

"Gone; all are gone, the old familiar faces!"

Two circles of rare social enjoyment — differing as widely as possible in all external circumstances — but each superior in its kind to all others, during the same period frankly opened to men of letters — now existing only in the memories of those who are fast departing from us — may, without offence, be placed side by side in grateful recollection; they are the dinners at Holland House and the suppers of "the Lambs" at the Temple, Great Russell Street, and Islington. Strange, at first, as this juxtaposition may seem, a little reflection will convince the few survivors who have enjoyed both, that it involves no injustice to either; while, with those who are too young to have been admitted to these rare festivities, we may exercise the privilege of age by boasting what good fellowship was once enjoyed, and what "good talk" there was once in the world!

But let us call to mind the aspects of each scene, before we attempt to tell of the conversation, which will be harder to recall and impossible to characterize. And first, let us invite the reader to assist at a dinner

at Holland House in the height of the London and Parliamentary season, say a Saturday in June. It is scarcely seven — for the luxuries of the house are enhanced by a punctuality in the main object of the day, which yields to no dilatory guest of whatever pretension — and you are seated in an oblong room, rich in old gilding, opposite a deep recess, pierced by large old windows, through which the rich branches of trees bathed in golden light, just admit the faint outline of the Surrey Hills. Among the guests are some perhaps of the highest rank, always some of high political importance, about whom the interest of busy life gathers, intermixed with others eminent already in literature or art, or of that dawning promise which the hostess delights to discover and the host to smile on. All are assembled for the purpose of enjoyment; the anxieties of the minister, the feverish struggles of the partisan, the silent toils of the artist or critic, are finished for the week; professional and literary jealousies are hushed; sickness, decrepitude, and death are silently voted shadows; and the brilliant assemblage is prepared to exercise to the highest degree the extraordinary privilege of mortals to live in the knowledge of mortality without its consciousness, and to people the present hour with delights, as if a man lived and laughed and enjoyed in this world forever. Every appliance of physical luxury which the most delicate art can supply, attends on each; every faint wish which luxury creates is anticipated; the noblest and most gracious countenance in the world smiles over the happiness it is diffusing, and redoubles it by cordial invitations and encouraging words, which set the humblest stranger guest at perfect ease. As the dinner merges into the dessert,

and the sunset casts a richer glow on the branches, still, or lightly waving in the evening light, and on the scene within, the harmony of all sensations becomes more perfect; a delighted and delighting chuckle invites attention to some joyous sally of the richest intellectual wit reflected in the faces of all, even to the favorite page in green, who attends his mistress with duty like that of the antique world; the choicest wines are enhanced in their liberal but temperate use by the vista opened in Lord Holland's tales of bacchanalian evenings at Brookes's, with Fox and Sheridan, when potations deeper and more serious rewarded the Statesman's toils and shortened his days; until at length the serener pleasure of conversation, of the now carelessly scattered groups, is enjoyed in that old, long, unrivalled library in which Addison mused, and wrote, and drank; where every living grace attends; "and more than echoes talk along the walls." One happy peculiarity of these assemblies was, the number of persons in different stations and of various celebrity, who were gratified by seeing, still more, in hearing and knowing each other; the statesman was relieved from care by association with the poet of whom he had heard and partially read; and the poet was elevated by the courtesy which "bared the *great* heart" which "beats beneath a star;" and each felt, not rarely, the true dignity of the other, modestly expanding under the most genial auspices.

Now turn to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, at ten o'clock, when the sedater part of the company are assembled, and the happier stragglers are dropping in from the play. Let it be any autumn or winter month, when the fire is blazing steadily, and the clean-swept hearth and whist-tables speak of the spirit of Mrs.

Battle, and serious looks require "the rigor of the game." The furniture is old-fashioned and worn; the ceiling low, and not wholly unstained by traces of "the great plant," though now virtuously foreborne: but the Hogarths, in narrow black frames, abounding in infinite thought, humor and pathos, enrich the walls; and all things wear an air of comfort and hearty English welcome. Lamb himself, yet unrelaxed by the glass, is sitting with a sort of Quaker primness at the whist-table, the gentleness of his melancholy smile half lost in his intentness on the game; his partner, the author of "Political Justice," (the majestic expression of his large head not disturbed by disproportion of his comparatively diminutive stature,) is regarding his hand with a philosophic but not a careless eye; Captain Burney, only not venerable because so young in spirit, sits between them; and H. C. R., who alone now and then breaks the proper silence, to welcome some incoming guest, is his happy partner — true winner in the game of life, whose leisure achieved early, is devoted to his friends! At another table, just beyond the circle which extends from the fire, sit another four. The broad, burly, jovial bulk of John Lamb, the Ajax Telamon of the slender clerks of the old South Sea House, whom he sometimes introduces to the rooms of his younger brother, surprised to learn from them that he is growing famous, confronts the stately but courteous Alsager; while P., "his few hairs bristling" at gentle objurgation, watches his partner M. B., dealing, with "soul more white"* than the hands of which

* Lamb's Sonnet, dedicatory of his first volume of prose to this cherished friend, thus concludes: —

"Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
I have not found a whiter soul than thine"

Lamb once said, "M., if dirt was trumps, what hands you would hold!" In one corner of the room, you may see the pale earnest countenance of Charles Lloyd, who is discoursing "of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," with Leigh Hunt; and, if you choose to listen, you will scarcely know which most to admire — the severe logic of the melancholy reasoner, or its graceful evasion by the tricksome fancy of the joyous poet. Basil Montague, gentle enthusiast in the cause of humanity, which he has lived to see triumphant, is pouring into the outstretched ear of George Dyer some tale of legalized injustice, which the recipient is vainly endeavoring to comprehend. Soon the room fills; in *slouches* Hazlitt from the theatre, where his stubborn anger for Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo has been softened by Miss Stephen's angelic notes, which might "chase anger, and grief, and fear, and sorrow, and pain from mortal or immortal minds;" Kenney, with a tremulous pleasure, announces that there is a crowded house to the ninth representation of his new comedy, of which Lamb lays down his cards to inquire; or Ayrton, mildly radiant, whispers the continual triumph of "Don Giovanni," for which Lamb, incapable of opera, is happy to take his word. Now and then an actor glances on us from "the rich Cathay" of the world behind the scenes, with news of its brighter humankind, and with looks reflecting the public favor — Liston, grave beneath the weight of the town's regards — or Miss Kelly, unexhausted in spirit by alternating the drolleries of high farce with the terrible pathos of melodrama, — or Charles Kemble mirrors the chivalry of thought, and ennobles the party by bending on them looks beaming with the aristocracy of nature. Mean-

while Becky lays the cloth on the side-table, under the direction of the most quiet, sensible, and kind of women — who soon compels the younger and more hungry of the guests to partake largely of the cold roast lamb or boiled beef, the heaps of smoking roasted potatoes, and the vast jug of porter, often replenished from the foaming pots, which the best tap of Fleet Street supplies. Perfect freedom prevails, save when the hospitable pressure of the mistress excuses excess; and perhaps, the physical enjoyment of the play-goer exhausted with pleasure, or of the author jaded with the labor of the brain, is not less than that of the guests at the most charming of aristocratic banquets. As the hot water and its accompaniments appear, and the severities of whist relax, the light of conversation thickens: Hazlitt, catching the influence of the spirit from which he has lately begun to abstain, utters some fine criticism with struggling emphasis; Lamb stammers out puns suggestive of wisdom, for happy Barron Field to admire and echo; the various driblets of talk combine into a stream, while Miss Lamb moves gently about to see that each modest stranger is duly served; turning, now and then, an anxious, loving eye on Charles, which is softened into a half humorous expression of resignation to inevitable fate, as he mixes his second tumbler! This is on ordinary nights, when the accustomed Wednesday-men assemble; but there is a difference on great extra nights, gladdened by "the bright visitations" of Wordsworth or Coleridge: — the cordiality of the welcome is the same, but a sedater wisdom prevails. Happy hours were they for the young disciple of the then desperate, now triumphant cause of Wordsworth's genius, to be admitted to the presence of the poet who had opened

a new world for him in the undiscovered riches of his own nature, and its affinities with the outer universe; whom he worshipped the more devoutly for the world's scorn; for whom he felt the future in the instant, and anticipated the "All hail hereafter!" which the great poet has lived to enjoy! To win him to speak of his own poetry — to hear him recite its noblest passages — and to join in his brave defiance of the fashion of the age — was the solemn pleasure of such a season; and, of course, superseded all minor disquisitions. So, when Coleridge came, argument, wit, humor, criticism were hushed; the pertest, smartest, and the cleverest felt that all were assembled to listen; and if a card-table had been filled, or a dispute begun before he was excited to continuous speech, his gentle voice, undulating in music, soon

> "Suspended *whist*, and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience."

The conversation which animated each of these memorable circles, approximated, in essence, much more nearly than might be surmised from the difference in station of the principal talkers, and the contrast in physical appliances; that of the bowered saloon of Holland House having more of earnestness and depth, and that of the Temple-attic more of airy grace than would be predicated by a superficial observer. The former possessed the peculiar interest of directly bordering on the scene of political conflict — gathering together the most eloquent leaders of the Whig party, whose repose from energetic action spoke of the week's conflict, and in whom the moment's enjoyment derived a peculiar charm from the perilous glories of the struggle which the morrow was to renew — when power

was just within reach, or held with a convulsive grasp — like the eager and solemn pleasure of the soldier's banquet in the pause of victory. The pervading spirit of Lamb's parties was also that of social progress; but it was the spirit of the dreamers and thinkers, not of the combatants of the world — men who, it may be, drew their theories from a deeper range of meditation, and embraced the future with more comprehensive hope — but about whom the immediate interest of party did not gather; whose victories were all within; whose rewards were visions of blessings for their species in the furthest horizon of benevolent prophecy. If a profounder thought was sometimes dragged to light in the dim circle of Lamb's companions than was native to the brighter sphere, it was still a rare felicity to watch there the union of elegance with purpose in some leader of party — the delicate, almost fragile grace of illustration in some one, perhaps destined to lead advancing multitudes or to withstand their rashness; to observe the growth of strength in the midst of beauty expanding from the sense of the heroic past, as the famed Basil tree of Boccaccio grew from the immolated relic beneath it. If the alternations in the former oscillated between wider extremes, touching on the wildest farce and most earnest tragedy of life; the rich space of brilliant comedy which lived ever between them in the latter, was diversified by serious interests and heroic allusions. Sydney Smith's wit — not so wild, so grotesque, so deep-searching as Lamb's — had even more quickness of intellectual demonstration; wedded moral and political wisdom to happiest language, with a more rapid perception of secret affinities; was capable of

producing epigrammatic splendor reflected more permanently in the mind, than the fantastic brilliancy of those rich conceits which Lamb stammered out with his painful smile. Mackintosh might vie with Coleridge in vast and various knowledge; but there the competition between these great talkers ends, and the contrast begins; the contrast between facility and inspiration; between the ready access to each ticketed and labelled compartment of history, science, art, criticism, and the genius that fused and renovated all. But then a younger spirit appeared at Lord Holland's table to redress the balance — not so poetical as Coleridge, but more lucid — in whose vast and joyous memory all the mighty past lived and glowed anew; whose declamations presented, not groups tinged with distant light, like those of Coleridge, but a series of historical figures in relief, exhibited in bright succession, as if by dioramic art there glided before us embossed surfaces of heroic life.* Rogers too, was there

* I take leave to copy the glowing picture of the evenings of Holland House and of its admirable master, drawn by this favorite guest himself, from an article which adorned the "Edinburgh Review," just after Lord Holland's death.

"The time is coming when, perhaps a few old men, the last survivors of our generation, will in vain seek, amidst new streets, and squares, and railway stations, for the site of that dwelling which was in their youth the favorite resort of wits and beauties — of painters and poets — of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen. They will then remember, with strange tenderness, many objects once familiar to them — the avenue and the terrace, the busts and the paintings; the carving, the grotesque gilding, and the enigmatical mottoes. With peculiar fondness, they will recall that venerable chamber, in which all the antique gravity of a college library was so singularly blended with all that female grace and wit could devise to embellish a drawing-room. They will recollect, not unmoved, those shelves loaded with the varied learning of many lands and many ages; those portraits in which were preserved the features of the best and wisest Englishmen of two generations. They will recollect how many men who have guided the politics of Europe — who have moved great

— connecting the literature of the last age with this, partaking of some of the best characteristics of both — whose first poem sparkled in the closing darkness of the last century "like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear," and who was advancing from a youth which had anticipated memory, to an age of kindness and hope; and Moore, who paused in the fluttering expression of graceful trifles, to whisper some deep-toned thought of Ireland's wrongs and sorrows.

assemblies by reason and eloquence — who have put life into bronze and canvas, or who have left to posterity things so written as it shall not willingly let them die — were there mixed with all that was loveliest and gayest in the society of the most splendid of capitals. They will remember the singular character which belonged to that circle, in which every talent and accomplishment, every art and science, had its place. They will remember how the last debate was discussed in one corner, and the last comedy of Scribe in another; while Wilkie gazed with modest admiration on Reynolds' Baretti; while Mackintosh turned over Thomas Aquinas to verify a quotation; while Talleyrand related his conversation with Barras at the Luxemburg, or his ride with Lannes over the field of Austerlitz. They will remember, above all, the grace — and the kindness, far more admirable than grace — with which the princely hospitality of that ancient mansion was dispensed. They will remember the venerable and benignant countenance, and the cordial voice of him who bade them welcome. They will remember that temper which years of pain, of sickness, of lameness, of confinement, seemed only to make sweeter and sweeter; and that frank politeness, which at once relieved all the embarrassment of the youngest and most timid writer or artist, who found himself for the first time among Ambassadors and Earls. They will remember that constant flow of conversation, so natural, so animated, so various, so rich with observation and anecdote; that wit which never gave a wound; that exquisite mimicry which ennobled, instead of degrading; that goodness of heart which appeared in every look and accent, and gave additional value to every talent and acquirement. They will remember, too, that he whose name they hold in reverence was not less distinguished by the inflexible uprightness of his political conduct, than by his loving disposition and his winning manners. They will remember that, in the last lines which he traced, he expressed his joy that he had done nothing unworthy of the friend of Fox and Grey; and they will have reason to feel similar joy, if, in looking back on many troubled years, they cannot accuse themselves of having done anything unworthy of men who were distinguished by the friendship of Lord Holland"

Literature and Art supplied the favorite topics to each of these assemblies, — both discussed with earnest admiration, but surveyed in different aspects. The conversation at Lord Holland's was wont to mirror the happiest aspects of the living mind; to celebrate the latest discoveries in science; to echo the quarterly decisions of Imperial criticism; to reflect the modest glow of young reputations; — all was gay, graceful, decisive, as if the pen of Jeffrey could have spoken; or, if it reverted to old times, it rejoiced in those classical associations which are always young. At Lamb's, on the other hand, the topics were chiefly sought among the obscure and remote; the odd, the quaint, the fantastic were drawn out from their dusty recesses; nothing could be more foreign to its embrace than the modern circulating library, even when it teemed with the Scotch novels. Whatever the subject was, however, in the more aristocratic, or the humbler sphere, it was always discussed by those best entitled to talk on it; no others had a chance of being heard. This remarkable freedom from *bores* was produced in Lamb's circle by the authoritative texture of its commanding minds; in Lord Holland's, by the more direct, and more genial influence of the hostess, which checked that tenacity of subject and opinion which sometimes broke the charm of Lamb's parties by "a duel in the form of a debate." Perhaps beyond any other hostess, — certainly far beyond any host, Lady Holland possessed the tact of perceiving, and the power of evoking the various capacities which lurked in every part of the brilliant circles over which she presided, and restrained each to its appropriate sphere, and portion of the evening. To enkindle the enthusiasm of

an artist on the theme over which he had achieved the most facile mastery; to set loose the heart of the rustic poet, and imbue his speech with the freedom of his native hills; to draw from the adventurous traveller a breathing picture of his most imminent danger; or to embolden the bashful soldier to disclose his own share in the perils and glories of some famous battle-field; to encourage the generous praise of friendship when the speaker and the subject reflected interest on each other; or win from an awkward man of science the secret history of a discovery which had astonished the world; to conduct these brilliant developments to the height of satisfaction, and then to shift the scene by the magic of a word, were among her nightly successes. And if this extraordinary power over the elements of social enjoyment was sometimes wielded without the entire concealment of its despotism; if a decisive check sometimes rebuked a speaker who might intercept the variegated beauty of Jeffrey's indulgent criticism, or the jest announced and self-rewarded in Sydney Smith's cordial and triumphant laugh, the authority was too clearly exerted for the evening's prosperity, and too manifestly impelled by an urgent consciousness of the value of these golden hours which were fleeting within its confines, to sadden the enforced silence with more than a momentary regret. If ever her prohibition — clear, abrupt, and decisive, — indicated more than a preferable regard for livelier discourse, it was when a depreciatory tone was adopted towards genius, or goodness, or honest endeavor, or when some friend, personal or intellectual, was mentioned in slighting phrase. Habituated to a generous partisanship, by strong sympathy with a great political

cause, she carried the fidelity of her devotion to that cause into her social relations, and was ever the truest and the fastest of friends. The tendency, often more idle than malicious, to soften down the intellectual claims of the absent, which so insidiously besets literary conversation, and teaches a superficial insincerity, even to substantial esteem and regard, and which was sometimes insinuated into the conversation of Lamb's friends, though never into his own, found no favor in her presence; and hence the conversations over which she presided, perhaps beyond all that ever flashed with a kindred splendor, were marked by that integrity of good-nature which might admit of their exact repetition to every living individual whose merits were discussed, without the danger of inflicting pain. Under her auspices, not only all critical, but all personal talk was tinged with kindness; the strong interest which she took in the happiness of her friends, shed a peculiar sunniness over the aspects of life presented by the common topics of alliances, and marriages, and promotions; and there was not a hopeful engagement, or a happy wedding, or a promotion of a friend's son, or a new intellectual triumph of any youth with whose name and history she was familiar, but became an event on which she expected and required congratulation as on a part of her own fortune. Although there was necessarily a preponderance in her society of the sentiment of popular progress, which once was cherished almost exclusively by the party to whom Lord Holland was united by sacred ties, no expression of triumph in success, no virulence in sudden disappointment, was ever permitted to wound the most sensitive ears of her conservative guests. It

might be that some placid comparison of recent with former times, spoke a sense of freedom's peaceful victory; or that, on the giddy edge of some great party struggle, the festivities of the evening might take a more serious cast, as news arrived from the scene of contest, and the pleasure might be deepened by the peril; but the feeling was always restrained by the supremacy given to those permanent solaces for the mind, in the beautiful and the great, which no political changes disturb. Although the death of the noble master of the venerated mansion closed its portals forever on the exquisite enjoyments to which they had been so generously expanded, the art of conversation lived a little longer in the smaller circle which Lady Holland still drew almost daily around her; honoring his memory by following his example, and struggling against the perpetual sense of unutterable bereavement, by rendering to literature that honor and those reliefs, which English aristocracy has too often denied it; and seeking consolation in making others proud and happy. That lingering happiness is extinct now; Lamb's kindred circle — kindred, though so different — dispersed almost before he died; the "thoughts that wandered through eternity," are no longer expressed in time; the fancies and conceits, "gay creatures of the element" of social delight, "that in the colors of the rainbow lived, and played in the plighted clouds," flicker only in the backward perspective of waning years; and for the survivors, I may venture to affirm, no such conversation as they have shared in either circle will ever be theirs again in this world!

Before closing these last Memorials of Charles and Mary Lamb, it may be permitted me to glance sep-

arately at some of the friends who are grouped around them in memory, and who, like them, live only in recollection, and in the works they have left behind them.

GEORGE DYER was one of the first objects of Lamb's youthful reverence, for he had attained the stately rank of Grecian in the venerable school of Christ's Hospital, when Charles entered it, a little, timid, affectionate child; but this boyish respect, once amounting to awe, gave place to a familiar habit of loving banter, which springing from the depths of old regard, approximated to school-boy roguery, and, now and then, though very rarely, gleamed on the consciousness of the ripe scholar. No contrast could be more vivid than that presented by the relations of each to the literature they both loved; one divining its inmost essences, plucking out the heart of its mysteries, shedding light on its dimmest recesses; the other devoted, with equal assiduity, to its externals. Books, to Dyer, "were a real world, both pure and good;" among them he passed, unconscious of time, from youth to extreme age, vegetating on their dates and forms, and "trivial fond records," in the learned air of great libraries, or the dusty confusion of his own, with the least possible apprehension of any human interest vital in their pages, or of any spirit of wit or fancy glancing across them. His life was an Academic pastoral. Methinks I see his gaunt, awkward form, set off by trousers too short, like those outgrown by a gawky lad, and a rusty coat as much too large for the wearer, hanging about him like those garments which the aristocratic Milesian peasantry prefer to the most comfortable rustic dress; his long head silvered over with short yet

straggling hair, and his dark gray eyes glistening with faith and wonder, as Lamb satisfies the curiosity which has gently disturbed his studies as to the authorship of the "Waverley Novels," by telling him, in the strictest confidence, that they are the works of Lord Castlereagh, just returned from the Congress of Sovereigns at Vienna! Off he runs, with animated stride and shambling enthusiasm, nor stops till he reaches Maida Hill, and breathes his news into the startled ear of Leigh Hunt, who, "as a public writer," ought to be possessed of the great fact with which George is laden! Or shall I endeavor to revive the bewildered look with which, just after he had been announced as one of Lord Stanhope's executors and residuary legatees, he received Lamb's grave inquiry, "Whether it was true, as commonly reported, that he was to be made a Lord?" "O dear no! Mr. Lamb," responded he with earnest seriousness, but not without a moment's quivering vanity, "I could not think of such a thing; it is not true, I assure you." "I thought not," said Lamb, "and I contradict it wherever I go; but the government will not ask your consent; they may raise you to the peerage without your even knowing it." "I hope not, Mr. Lamb; indeed, indeed, I hope not; it would not suit me at all," responded Dyer, and went his way, musing on the possibility of a strange honor descending on his reluctant brow. Or shall I recall the visible presentment of his bland unconsciousness of evil when his sportive friend taxed it to the utmost, by suddenly asking what he thought of the murderer Williams, who, after destroying two families in Ratcliffe Highway, had broken prison by suicide, and whose body had just before been conveyed, in shocking pro-

cession, to its cross-road grave! The desperate attempt to compel the gentle optimist to speak ill of a mortal creature produced no happier success than the answer, "Why, I should think, Mr. Lamb, he must have been rather an eccentric character." This simplicity of a nature not only unspotted by the world, but almost abstracted from it, will seem the more remarkable, when it is known that it was subjected, at the entrance of life, to a hard battle with fortune. Dyer was the son of very poor parents, residing in an eastern suburb of London, Stepney, or Bethnal-greenward, where he attracted the attention of two elderly ladies as a serious child, with an extraordinary love for books. They obtained for him a presentation to Christ's Hospital, which he entered at seven years of age; fought his way through its sturdy ranks to its head; and, at nineteen, quitted it for Cambridge, with only an exhibition and his scholarly accomplishments to help him. On he went, however, placid, if not rejoicing, through the difficulties of a life illustrated only by scholarship; encountering tremendous labors; unresting yet serene; until at eighty-five he breathed out the most blameless of lives, which began in a struggle to end in a learned dream!

Mr. Godwin, who during the happiest period of Lamb's weekly parties, was a constant assistant at his whist-table, resembled Dyer in simplicity of manner and devotion to letters; but the simplicity was more superficial, and the devotion more profound than the kindred qualities in the guileless scholar; and, instead of forming the entire being, only marked the surface of a nature beneath which extraordinary power lay hidden. As the absence of worldly wisdom sub-

jected Dyer to the sportive sallies of Lamb, so a like deficiency in Godwin exposed him to the coarser mirth of Mr. Horne Tooke, who was sometimes inclined to seek relaxation for the iron muscles of his imperturbable mind in trying to make a philosopher look foolish. To a stranger's gaze the author of the "Political Justice" and "Caleb Williams," as he appeared in the Temple, always an object of curiosity except to his familiars, presented none of those characteristics with which fancy had invested the daring speculator and relentless novelist; nor, when he broke silence, did his language tend to reconcile the reality with the expectation. The disproportion of a frame which, low of stature, was surmounted by a massive head which might befit a presentable giant, was rendered almost imperceptible, not by any vivacity of expression (for his countenance was rarely lighted up by the deep-seated genius within), but by a gracious suavity of manner which many "a fine old English gentleman" might envy. His voice was small; the topics of his ordinary conversation trivial, and discussed with a delicacy and precision which might almost be mistaken for finical; and the presence of the most interesting persons in literary society, of which he had enjoyed the best, would not prevent him from falling after dinner into the most profound sleep. This gentle, drowsy, spiritless demeanor, presents a striking contrast to a reputation which once filled Europe with its echoes; but it was, in truth, when rightly understood, perfectly consistent with those intellectual elements which in some raised the most enthusiastic admiration, and from others elicited the wildest denunciations of visionary terror.

In Mr. Godwin's mind, the faculty of abstract reason so predominated over all others, as practically to extinguish them; and his taste, akin to this faculty, sought only for its development through the medium of composition for the press. He had no imagination, no fancy, no wit, no humor; or if he possessed any of those faculties, they were obscured by that of pure reason; and being wholly devoid of the quick sensibility which irritates speech into eloquence, and of the passion for immediate excitement and applause, which tends to its presentment before admiring assemblies, he desired no other audience than that which he could silently address, and learned to regard all things through a contemplative medium. In this sense, far more than in the extravagant application of his wildest theories, he levelled all around him; admitted no greatness but that of literature; and neither desired nor revered any triumphs but those of thought. If such a reasoning faculty, guided by such a disposition, had been applied to abstract sciences, no effect remarkable beyond that of rare excellence, would have been produced; but the apparent anomalies of Mr. Godwin's intellectual history arose from the application of his power to the passions, the interests, and the hopes of mankind, at a time when they enkindled into frightful action, and when he calmly worked out his problems among their burning elements with the "ice-brook's temper," and the severest logic. And if some extreme conclusions were inconsistent with the faith and the duty which alone can sustain and regulate our nature, there was no small compensation in the severity of the process to which the student was impelled, for the slender peril which might remain lest the results should be practically adopted

A system founded on pure reason, which rejected the impulses of natural affection, the delights of gratitude, the influences of prejudice, the bondage of custom, the animation of personal hope; which appealed to no passion — which suggested no luxury — which excited no animosities — and which offered no prize for the observance of its laws, except a participation in the expanding glories of progressive humanity, was little calculated to allure from the accustomed paths of ancient ordinance any man disposed to walk in them by the lights from heaven. On the other hand, it was a healthful diversion from those seductions in which the heart secretly enervates and infects the understanding, to invite the revolutionary speculator to the contemplation of the distant and the refined; by the pursuit of impracticable error to brace the mind for the achievement of everlasting truth; and on the "heat and flame of the distemper" of an impassioned democracy to "sprinkle cool patience." The idol Political Justice, of which he was the slow and laborious architect, if it for awhile enchanted, did not long enthral or ever debase its worshippers; "its bones were marrowless, its blood was cold,"— but there was surely "speculation in its eyes" which "glared withal" into the future. Such high casuistry as it evoked has always an ennobling tendency, even when it dallies with error; the direction of thought in youth is of less consequence than the mode of its exercise; and it is only when the base interests and sensual passions of mortality pander to the understanding that truth may fear for the issue.

The author of this cold and passionless intellectual fantasy looked out upon the world he hoped to inform from recesses of contemplation which the outward

incidents of life did not disturb, and which, when closed, left him a common man, appearing to superficial observers rather below than above the level of ordinary talkers. To his inward gaze the stupendous changes which agitated Europe, at the time he wrote, were silent as a picture. The pleasure of his life was to think; its business was to write; all else in it was vanity. Regarding his own being through the same spiritualizing medium, he saw no reason why the springs of its existence should wear out, and, in the spring-time of his speculation, held that man might become immortal on earth by the effort of the will. His style partook of the quality of his intellect and the character of its purposes — it was pure, simple, colorless. His most imaginative passages are inspired only by a logic quickened into enthusiasm by the anticipation of the approaching discovery of truth — the dawning *Eureka* of the reasoner; they are usually composed of "line upon line and precept upon precept," without an involution of style, or an eddy in the thought. He sometimes complained, though with the benignity that always marked his estimate of his opponents, that Mr. Malthus's style was too richly ornamented for argument; and certainly, with all its vivacity of illustration it lacks the transparent simplicity of his own. The most palpable result which he ever produced by his writings was the dark theory in the first edition of the work on Population, which was presented as an answer to his reasoning on behalf of the perfectibility of man; and he used to smile at his ultimate triumph, when the writer, who had only intended a striking paradox, tamed it down to the wisdom of economy, and adapted it to Poor-law uses;

neutralized his giant spectres of Vice and Misery by the practical intervention of Moral Restraint; and left the optimist, Godwin, still in unclouded possession of the hope of universal peace and happiness, postponed only to that time when passion shall be subjected to reason, and population, no more rising like a resistless tide, between adamantine barriers to submerge the renovated earth, shall obey the commands of wisdom; rise and fall as the means of subsistence expand or contract; and only contribute an impulse to the universal harmony.

The persons of Mr. Godwin's romances — stranger still — are the naked creations of the same intellectual power, marvellously endowed with galvanic life. Though with happier symmetry, they are as much made out of chains and links of reasoning, as the monster was fashioned by the chemistry of the student, in the celebrated novel of his gifted daughter. Falkland, and Caleb Williams, are the mere impersonations of the unbounded love of reputation, and irresistible curiosity; these ideas are developed in each with masterly iteration — to the two ideas all causes give way; and materials are subjected, often of remarkable coarseness, to the refinement of the conception. Hazlitt used to observe of these two characters, that the manner they are played into each other, was equal to anything of the kind in the drama; and there is no doubt that the opposition, though at the cost of probability, is most powerfully maintained: but the effect is partly owing to the absence of all extrinsic interest which could interfere with the main purpose; the beatings of the heart become audible, not only from their own intensity, but from the desolation which the author has expanded around them. The consistency in each, is that

of an idea, not of a character; and if the effect of form and color is produced, it is, as in line engraving, by the infinite minuteness and delicacy of the single strokes. In like manner, the incidents by which the author seeks to exemplify the wrongs inflicted by power on goodness in civilized society, are utterly fantastical; nothing can be more minute, nothing more unreal; the youth being involved by a web of circumstances woven to immesh him, which the condition of society that the author intends to repudiate, renders impossible; and which, if true, would prove not that the framework of law is tyrannous, but that the will of a single oppressor may elude it. The subject of "St. Leon" is more congenial to the author's power; but it is, in like manner, a logical development of the consequences of a being prolonged on earth through ages; and, as the dismal vista expands, the skeleton speculators crowd in to mock and sadden us!

Mr. Godwin was thus a man of two beings, which held little discourse with each other — the daring inventor of theories constructed of air-drawn diagrams — and the simple gentleman, who suffered nothing to disturb or excite him, beyond his study. He loved to walk in the crowded streets of London, not like Lamb, enjoying the infinite varieties of many-colored life around him, but because he felt, amidst the noise, and crowd, and glare, more intensely the imperturbable stillness of his own contemplations. His means of comfortable support were mainly supplied by a shop in Skinner Street, where, under the auspices of "M. J. Godwin & Co." the prettiest and wisest books for children issued, which old-fashioned parents presented to their children, without suspecting that the graceful

lessons of piety and goodness which charmed away the selfishness of infancy, were published, and sometimes revised, and now and then written, by a philosopher whom they would scarcely venture to name! He met the exigencies which the vicissitudes of business sometimes caused, with the trusting simplicity which marked his course — he asked his friends for aid without scruple, considering that their means were justly the due of one who toiled in thought for their inward life, and had little time to provide for his own outward existence; and took their excuses, when offered, without doubt or offence. The very next day after I had been honored and delighted by an introduction to him at Lamb's chambers, I was made still more proud and happy by his appearance at my own on such an errand — which my poverty, not my will, rendered abortive. After some pleasant chat on indifferent matters, he carelessly observed, that he had a little bill for 150*l.* falling due on the morrow, which he had forgotten till that morning, and desired the loan of the necessary amount for a few weeks. At first, in eager hope of being able thus to oblige one whom I regarded with admiration akin to awe, I began to consider whether it was possible for me to raise such a sum; but, alas! a moment's reflection sufficed to convince me that hope was vain, and I was obliged, with much confusion, to assure my distinguished visitor how glad I should have been to serve him, but that I was only just starting as a special pleader, was obliged to write for magazines to help me on, and had not such a sum in the world. "Oh dear," said the philosopher, "I thought you were a young gentleman of fortune — don't mention it — don't mention it; I shall do very well elsewhere:"

— and then, in the most gracious manner, reverted to our former topics; and sat in my small room for half an hour, as if to convince me that my want of fortune made no difference in his esteem. A slender tribute to the literature he had loved and served so well, was accorded to him in the old age to which he attained, by the gift of a sinecure in the Exchequer, of about 200*l.* a year, connected with the custody of the Records; and the last time I saw him, he was heaving an immense key to unlock the musty treasures of which he was guardian — how unlike those he had unlocked, with finer talisman, for the astonishment and alarm of one generation, and the delight of all others!

JOHN THELWALL, who had once exulted in the appellation of Citizen Thelwall, having been associated with Coleridge and Southey in their days of enthusiastical dreaming, though a more precise and practical reformer than either, was introduced by them to Lamb, and was welcomed to his circle, in the true catholicism of its spirit, although its master cared nothing for the Roman virtue which Thelwall devotedly cherished, and which Horne Tooke kept in uncertain vibration between a rebellion and a hoax. Lamb justly esteemed Thelwall as a thoroughly honest man; — not honest merely in reference to the moral relations of life, but to the processes of thought; one whose mind, acute, vigorous, and direct, perceived only the object immediately before it, and, undisturbed by collateral circumstances, reflected, with literal fidelity, the impression it received, and maintained it as sturdily against the beauty that might soften it, or the wisdom that might mould it, as against the tyranny that would stifle its expression. "If to be honest as

the world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand," to be honest as the mind works is to be one man of a million; and such a man was Thelwall. Starting with imperfect education from the thraldom of domestic oppression, with slender knowledge, but with fiery zeal, into the dangers of political enterprise, and treading fearlessly on the verge of sedition, he saw nothing before him but powers which he assumed to be despotism and vice, and rushed headlong to crush them. The point of time — just that when the accumulated force of public opinion had obtained a virtual mastery over the accumulated corruptions of ages, but when power, still unconvinced of its danger, presented its boldest front to opposing intellect, or strove to crush it in the cruelty of awaking fear — gave scope for the ardent temperament of an orator almost as poor in scholastic cultivation as in external fortune; but strong in integrity, and rich in burning words.

Thus passionate Thelwall spoke boldly and vehemently — at a time when indignation was thought to be virtue; but there is no reason to believe he ever meditated any treason except that accumulated in the architectural sophistry of Lord Eldon, by which he proved a person who desired to awe the Government into a change of policy to be guilty of compassing the king's death — as thus: — that the king must resist the proposed alteration in his measures — that resisting he must be deposed — and that being deposed, he must necessarily die; — though his boldness of speech placed him in jeopardy even after the acquittals of his simple-minded associate Hardy, and his enigmatical instructor Tooke, who forsook him, and left him, when acquitted, to the mercy of the world. His life, which before

this event had been one of self-denial and purity remarkable in a young man who had imbibed the impulses of revolutionary France, partook of considerable vicissitude. At one time he was raised by his skill in correcting impediments of speech, and teaching elocution as a science, into elegant competence — at other times saddened by the difficulties of poorly requited literary toil and wholly unrequited patriotism; but he preserved his integrity and his cheerfulness — "a man of hope and forward-looking mind even to the last." Unlike Godwin, whose profound thoughts slowly struggled into form, and seldom found utterance in conversation, — speech was, in him, all in all, his delight, his profession, his triumph, with little else than passion to inspire or color it. The flaming orations of his "Tribune," rendered more piquant by the transparent masquerade of ancient history, which, in his youth, "touched monied worldlings with dismay," and infected the poor with dangerous anger, seemed vapid, spiritless, and shallow when addressed through the press to the leisure of the thoughtful. The light which glowed with so formidable a lustre before the evening audience, vanished on closer examination, and proved to be only a harmless phantom-vapor which left no traces of destructive energy behind it.

Thelwall, in person small, compact, muscular — with a head denoting indomitable resolution, and features deeply furrowed by the ardent workings of the mind, — was as energetic in all his pursuits and enjoyments as in political action. He was earnestly devoted to the Drama, and enjoyed its greatest representations with the freshness of a boy who sees a play for the first time. He hailed the kindred energy of Kean with enthusi-

astic praise; but abjuring the narrowness of his political vision in matters of taste, did justice to the nobler qualities of Mrs. Siddons and her brothers. In literature and art also, he relaxed the bigotry of his liberal intolerance, and expatiated in their wider fields with a taste more catholic. Here Lamb was ready with his sympathy, which indeed even the political zeal, that he did not share, was too hearty to repel. Although generally detesting lectures on literature as superficial and vapid substitutes for quiet reading, and recitations as unreal mockeries of the true Drama, he sometimes attended the entertainments, composed of both, which Thelwall, in the palmy days of his prosperity, gave at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, not on politics, which he had then forsaken for elocutionary science, though maintaining the principles of his youth, but partly on elocution, and partly on poetry and acting, into which he infused the fiery enthusiasm of his nature. Sometimes, indeed, his fervor animated his disquisitions on the philosophy of speech with greater warmth than he reserved for more attractive themes; the melted vowels were blended into a rainbow, or dispersed like fleecy clouds; and the theory of language was made interesting by the honesty and vigor of the speaker. Like all men who have been chiefly self-taught, he sometimes presented commonplaces as original discoveries, with an air which strangers mistook for quackery; but they were unjust; to the speaker these were the product of his own meditation, though familiar to many, and not rarely possessed the charm of originality in their freshness. Lamb at least, felt that it was good, among other companions of richer and more comprehensive intelligence, to have one friend who was undisturbed by mis-

giving either for himself or his cause; who enunciated wild paradox and worn-out commonplace with equal confidence; and who was ready to sacrifice ease, fortune, fame — everything but speech, and, if it had been possible, even *that* — to the cause of truth or friendship.

William Hazlitt was, for many years, one of the brightest and most constant ornaments of Lamb's parties; — linked to him in the firm bond of intellectual friendship — which remained unshaken in spite of some superficial differences, "short and far between," arising from Lamb's insensibility to Hazlitt's political animosities and his adherence to Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, who shared them. Hazlitt in his boyhood had derived from his father that attachment to abstract truth for its own sake, and that inflexible determination to cherish it, which naturally predominated in the being of the minister of a small rural congregation, who cherished religious opinions adverse to those of the great body of his countrymen, and waged a spiritual warfare throughout his peaceful course. Thus disciplined, he was introduced to the friendship of youthful poets, in whom the dawn of the French Revolution had enkindled hope, and passion, and opinions tinctured with hope and passion, which he eagerly embraced; and when changes passed over the prospects of mankind, which induced them, in maturer years, to modify the doctrines they had taught, he resented these defections almost as personal wrongs, and, when his pen found scope, and his tongue utterance, wrote and spoke of them with such bitterness as can only spring from the depths of old affection. No writer, however, except Wilson, did such noble justice to the poetry of

Wordsworth, when most despised, and to the genius of Coleridge, when most obscured; he cherished a true admiration for each in "the last recesses of the mind," and defended them with dogged resolution against the scorns and slights of the world. Still the superficial difference was, or seemed, too wide to admit of personal intercourse; and I do not think that during the many years which elapsed between my introduction to Lamb and Hazlitt's death, he ever met either of the poets at the rooms of the man they united in loving.

Although Mr. Hazlitt was thus staunch in his attachment to principles which he reverenced as true, he was by no means rigid in his mode of maintaining and illustrating them; but, on the contrary, frequently diminished the immediate effect of his reasonings by the prodigality and richness of the allusions with which he embossed them. He had as unquenchable a desire for truth as others have for wealth, or power, or fame; he pursued it with sturdy singleness of purpose; and enunciated it without favor or fear. But, besides that love of truth, that sincerity in pursuing it, and that boldness in telling it, he had also a fervent aspiration after the beautiful; a vivid sense of pleasure, and an intense consciousness of his own individual being, which sometimes produced obstacles to the current of speculation, by which it was broken into dazzling eddies or urged into devious windings. Acute, fervid, vigorous, as his mind was, it wanted the one great central power of Imagination, which brings all the other faculties into harmonious action; multiplies them into each other; makes truth visible in the forms of beauty, and substitutes intellectual vision for proof. Thus, in him, truth and beauty held divided empire. In him, the spirit was

willing, but the flesh was *strong;* and, when these contend, it is not difficult to anticipate the result; "for the power of beauty shall sooner transform honesty from what it is into a bawd, than the person of honesty shall transform beauty into its likeness." This "sometime paradox" was vividly exemplified in Hazlitt's personal history, his conversation, and his writings. To the solitudes of the country in which he mused on "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," a temperament of unusual ardor had given an intense interest, akin to that with which Rousseau has animated and oppressed the details of his early years.

He had not then, nor did he find till long afterwards, power to embody his meditations and feelings in words. The consciousness of thoughts which he could not hope adequately to express, increased his natural reserve, and he turned for relief to the art of painting, in which he might silently realize his dreams of beauty, and repay the loveliness of nature by fixing some of its fleeting aspects in immortal tints. A few old prints from the old masters awakened the spirit of emulation within him; the sense of beauty became identified in his mind with that of glory and duration; while the peaceful labor he enjoyed calmed the tumult in his veins, and gave steadiness to his pure and distant aim. He pursued the art with an earnestness and patience which he vividly describes in his essay, "On the Pleasure of Painting;" and to which he frequently reverted in the happiest moods of his conversation; and although in this, his chosen pursuit, he failed, the passionate desire for success, and the long struggle to attain it, left deep traces in his mind, heightening his keen perception of external things, and mingling with all his speculations

airy shapes and hues which he had vainly striven to transfer to canvas. A painter may acquire a fine insight into the nice distinctions of character, — he may copy manners in words as he does in colors, — but it may be apprehended that his course as a severe reasoner will be somewhat "troubled with thick-coming fancies." And if the successful pursuit of art may thus disturb the process of abstract contemplation, how much more may an unsatisfied ambition ruffle it; bid the dark threads of thought glitter with radiant fancies unrealized, and clothe the diagrams of speculation with the fragments of picture which the mind cherishes the more fondly, because the hand refused to realize? What wonder if, in the mind of an ardent youth, thus struggling in vain to give palpable existence to the shapes of loveliness which haunted him, "the homely beauty of the good old cause" should assume the fascinations not properly its own?

This association of beauty with reason diminished the immediate effect of Mr. Hazlitt's political essays, while it enhanced their permanent value. It was the fashion, in his lifetime, to denounce him as a sour Jacobin; but no description could be more unjust. Under the influence of some bitter feeling, or some wayward fancy, he occasionally poured out a furious invective against those whom he regarded as the enemies of liberty, or as apostates from her cause; but, in general, the force of his expostulation, or his reasoning, was diverted (unconsciously to himself) by figures and fantasies, by fine and quaint allusions, by quotations from his favorite authors, introduced with singular felicity, as respects the direct link of association, but ending, by their very beauty, to unnerve the mind

of the reader, and substitute the sense of luxury for clear conviction, or noble anger. In some of his essays, where the reasoning is most cogent, every other sentence contains some exquisite passage from Shakspeare, or Fletcher, or Wordsworth, trailing after it a line of golden associations; or some reference to a novel, over which we have a thousand times forgotten the wrongs of mankind; till, in the recurring shocks of pleasurable surprise, the main argument is forgotten. When, for example, he compares the position of certain political waverers to that of Clarissa Harlowe confronting the ravisher who would repeat his outrage, with the penknife pointed to her breast, and her eyes uplifted to Heaven, and describes them as having been, like her, trepanned into a house of ill-fame, near Pall-Mall, and there defending their soiled virtue with their penknives; what reader, at the suggestion of the stupendous scene which the allusion directly revives, can think or care about the renegade of yesterday? Here, again, is felt the want of that Imagination which brings all things into one, tinges all our thoughts and sympathies with one hue, and rejects every ornament which does not heighten or prolong the feeling which it seeks to embody.

Even when he retaliates on Southey for attacking his old copatriots, the poetical associations which bitter remembrance suggests, almost neutralize the vituperation; he brings every "flower which sad embroidery wears to strew the laureate hearse," where ancient regards are interred; and merges all the censure of the changed politician in praise of the simple dignity and the generous labors of a singularly noble and unsullied life. So little does he regard the unity of sentiment in his com-

positions, that in his "Letter to Gifford," after a series of just and bitter retorts on his maligner as "the fine link which connects literature with the police," he takes a fancy to teach that "ultra-crepidarian critic" his own theory of the natural disinterestedness of the human mind, and develops it, not in the dry, hard, mathematical style in which it was first enunciated, but "o'er informed" with the glow of sentiment, and terminating in an eloquent rhapsody. This latter portion of the letter is one of the noblest of his effusions, but it entirely destroys the first in the mind of the reader; for who, when thus contemplating the living wheels on which human benevolence is borne onwards in its triumphant career, and the spirit with which they are instinct, can think of the literary wasp which had settled for a moment upon them, and who had just before been mercilessly transfixed with minikin arrows?

But the most signal example of the influences which "the show of things" exercised over Mr. Hazlitt's mind was the setting up the Emperor Napoleon as his idol. He strove to justify this predilection to himself by referring it to the revolutionary origin of his hero, and the contempt with which he trampled upon the claims of legitimacy, and humbled the pride of kings. But if his "only love" thus sprung "from his only hate," it was not cherished in its blossom by antipathies. If there had been nothing in his mind which tended to aggrandizement and glory, and which would fain reconcile the principles of freedom with the lavish accumulation of power, he might have desired the triumph of young tyranny over legitimate thrones; but he would scarcely have watched its progress and its fall "like a lover and a child." His feeling for Bonaparte

in exile was not a sentiment of respect for fallen greatness; not a desire to trace "the soul of goodness in things evil;" not a loathing of the treatment the Emperor received from "his cousin-kings" in the day of adversity; but entire affection mingling with the current of the blood, and pervading the moral and intellectual being. Nothing less than this strong attachment, at once personal and refined, would have enabled him to encounter the toil of collecting and arranging facts and dates for four volumes of narrative, which constitute his "Life of Napoleon;" — a drudgery too abhorrent to his habits of mind as a thinker, to be sustained by any stimulus which the prospect of remuneration or the hope of applause could supply. It is not so much in the ingenious excuses which he discovers for the worst acts of his hero — offered even for the midnight execution of the Duke d'Enghien and the invasion of Spain — that the stamp of personal devotion is obvious, as in the graphic force with which he has delineated the short-lived splendors of the Imperial Court, and "the trivial fond records" he has gathered of every vestige of human feeling by which he could reconcile the Imperial Cynic to the species he scorned. The first two volumes of his work, although redeemed by scattered thoughts of true originality and depth, are often confused and spiritless; the characters of the principal revolutionists are drawn too much in the style of awkward, sprawling caricatures; but when the hero casts all his rivals into the distance, erects himself the individual enemy of England, consecrates his power by religious ceremonies, and defines it by the circle of a crown, the author's strength becomes concentrated; his narrative assumes an epic dignity and fervor; dallies with the

flowers of usurped prerogative, and glows with "the long-resounding march and energy divine." How happy and proud is he to picture the meeting of the Emperor with the Pope, and the grandeurs of the coronation! How he grows wanton in celebrating the fêtes of the Tuileries, as "presenting all the elegance of enchanted pageants," and laments them as "gone like a fairy revel!" How he "lives along the line" of Austerlitz, and rejoices in its thunder, and hails its setting sun, and exults in the minutest details of the subsequent meeting of the conquered sovereigns at the feet of the conqueror! How he expatiates on the fatal marriage with "the deadly Austrian," (as Mr. Cobbett justly called Maria Louisa,) as though it were a chapter in romance, and sheds the grace of beauty on the imperial picture! How he kindles with martial ardor as he describes the preparations against Russia; musters the myriads of barbarians with a show of dramatic justice; and fondly lingers among the brief triumphs of Moskwa on the verge of the terrible catastrophe! The narrative of that disastrous expedition is, indeed, written with a master's hand; we see the "grand army" marching to its destruction through the immense perspective; the wild hordes flying before the terror of its "coming;" the barbaric magnificence of Moscow towering in the remote distance; and when we gaze upon the sacrificial conflagration of the Kremlin, we feel that it is worthy to become the funeral pile of the conqueror's glories. It is well for the readers of this splendid work, that there is more in it of the painter than of the metaphysician; that its style glows with the fervor of battle, or stiffens with the spoils of victory; yet we wonder that this monument to imperial grandeur

should be raised from the dead level of jacobinism by an honest and profound thinker. The solution is, that although he was this, he was also more — that, in opinion, he was devoted to the cause of the people; but that, in feeling, he required some individual object of worship; that he selected Napoleon as one in whose origin and career he might at once impersonate his principles and gratify his affections; and that he adhered to his own idea with heroic obstinacy, when the "child and champion of the Republic" openly sought to repress all feeling and thought, but such as he could cast in his own iron moulds, and scoffed at popular enthusiasm even while it bore him to the accomplishment of his loftiest desires.

Mr. Hazlitt had little inclination to talk or write about contemporary authors, and still less to read them. He was with difficulty persuaded to look into the Scotch novels, but when he did so, he found them old in substance though new in form, read them with as much avidity as the rest of the world, and expressed better than any one else what all the world felt about them. His hearty love of them, however, did not diminish, but aggravate his dislike of the political opinions so zealously and consistently maintained, of their great author; and yet the strength of his hatred towards that which was accidental and transitory only set off the unabated power of his regard for the great and the lasting. Coleridge and Wordsworth were not moderns to him, for they were the inspirers of his youth, which was his own antiquity, and the feelings which were the germ of their poetry had sunk deep into his heart. With the exception of the works of these, and of his friends Barry Cornwall and Sheridan

Knowles, in whose successes he rejoiced, he held modern literature in slight esteem, and regarded the discoveries of science and the visions of optimism with an undazzled eye. His "large discourse of reason" looked not before, but after. He felt it a sacred duty, as a lover of genius and art, to defend the fame of the mighty dead. When the old painters were assailed in "The Catalogue Raisonné of the British Institution," he was "touched with noble anger." All his own vain longings after the immortality of the works which were libelled, — all the tranquillity and beauty they had shed into his soul, — all his comprehension of the sympathy and delight of thousands, which, accumulating through long time, had attested their worth — were fused together to dazzle and subdue the daring critic who would disturb the judgment of ages. So, when a popular poet assailed the fame of Rousseau, seeking to reverse the decision of posterity on what that great though unhappy writer had achieved by suggesting the opinion of people of condition in his neighborhood on the figure he made to their apprehensions while in the service of Madame de Warrens, he vindicated the prerogatives of genius with the true logic of passion. Few things irritated him more than the claims set up for the present generation to be wiser and better than those which have gone before it. He had no power of imagination to embrace the golden clouds which hung over the Future, but he rested and expatiated in the Past. To his apprehension human good did not appear a slender shoot of yesterday, like the beanstalk in the fairy tale, aspiring to the skies, and leading to an enchanted castle, but a huge growth of intertwisted fibres, grasping the earth by numberless roots of cus-

tom, habit, and affection, and bearing vestiges of "a thousand storms, a thousand thunders."

When I first met Hazlitt, in the year 1815, he was staggering under the blow of Waterloo. The reappearance of his imperial idol on the coast of France, and his triumphant march to Paris, like a fairy vision, had excited his admiration and sympathy to the utmost pitch; and though in many respects sturdily English in feeling, he could scarcely forgive the valor of the conquerors; and bitterly resented the captivity of the Emperor in St. Helena, which followed it, as if he had sustained a personal wrong. On this subject only, he was "eaten up with passion;" on all others he was the fairest, the most candid of reasoners. His countenance was then handsome, but marked by a painful expression; his black hair, which had curled stiffly over his temples, had scarcely received its first tints of gray; his gait was awkward; his dress was neglected; and, in the company of strangers, his bashfulness was almost painful, — but when, in the society of Lamb and one or two others, he talked on his favorite themes of old English books, or old Italian pictures, no one's conversation could be more delightful. The poets, from intercourse with whom he had drawn so much of his taste, and who had contributed to shed the noble infection of beauty through his reasoning faculties, had scarcely the opportunity of appreciating their progress. It was, in after-years, by the fireside of "the Lambs," that his tongue was gradually loosened, and his passionate thoughts found appropriate words. There, his struggles to express the fine conceptions with which his mind was filled were encouraged by entire sympathy; there he began to stammer out his just and original

conceptions of Chaucer and Spenser, and other English poets and prose writers, more talked of, though not better known by their countrymen; there he was thoroughly understood and dexterously cheered by Miss Lamb, whose nice discernment of his first efforts in conversation were dwelt upon by him with affectionate gratitude, even when most out of humor with the world. When he mastered his diffidence, he did not talk for effect, to dazzle, or surprise, or annoy, but with the most simple and honest desire to make his view of the subject in hand entirely apprehended by his hearer. There was sometimes an obvious struggle to do this to his own satisfaction: he seemed laboring to drag his thought to light from its deep lurking-place; and, with timid distrust of that power of expression which he had found so late in life, he often betrayed a fear lest he had failed to make himself understood, and recurred to the subject again and again, that he might be assured he had succeeded. With a certain doggedness of manner, he showed nothing pragmatical or exclusive; he never drove a principle to its utmost possible consequences, but, like Locksley, "allowed for the wind." For some years previous to his death he observed an entire abstinence from fermented liquors, which he had once quaffed with the proper relish he had for all the good things of this life, but which he courageously resigned when he found the indulgence perilous to his health and faculties. The cheerfulness with which he made this sacrifice was one of the most amiable traits in his character. He had no censure for others, who, in the same dangers, were less wise or less resolute; nor did he think he had earned, by his own constancy, any right to intrude advice which he knew,

if wanted, must be unavailing. Nor did he profess to be a convert to the general system of abstinence, which was advanced by one of his kindest and staunchest friends; he avowed that he yielded to necessity; and instead of avoiding the sight of that which he could no longer taste, he was seldom so happy as when he sat with friends at their wine, participating the sociality of the time, and renewing his own past enjoyment in that of his companions, without regret and without envy. Like Dr. Johnson, he made himself poor amends for the loss of wine by drinking tea, not so largely, indeed, as the hero of Boswell, but at least of equal potency; for he might have challenged Mrs. Thrale and all her sex to make stronger tea than his own. In society, as in politics, he was no flincher. He loved "to hear the chimes at midnight," without considering them as a summons to rise. At these seasons, when in his happiest mood, he used to dwell on the conversational powers of his friends, and live over again the delightful hours he had passed with them; repeat the pregnant puns that one had made; tell over again a story with which another had convulsed the room; or expatiate on the eloquence of a third; always best pleased when he could detect some talent which was unregarded by the world, and giving alike, to the celebrated and the unknown, due honor.

Mr. Hazlitt delivered three courses of lectures at the Surrey Institution, on *The English Poets;* on *The English Comic Writers;* and on *The Age of Elizabeth;* which Lamb (under protest against lectures in general) regularly attended, an earnest admirer, amidst crowds with whom the lecturer had "an imperfect sympathy." They consisted chiefly of Dissenters, who agreed with

him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, and his love of religious freedom, but who "loved no plays;" of Quakers, who approved him as the earnest opponent of slavery and capital punishment, but who "heard no music;" of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after "the improvement of the mind;" but to whom his favorite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle; of a few enemies who came to sneer; and a few friends, who were eager to learn and to admire. The comparative insensibility of the bulk of his audience to his finest passages sometimes provoked him to awaken their attention by points which broke the train of his discourse; after which, he could make himself amends by some abrupt paradox which might set their prejudices on edge, and make them fancy they were shocked. He startled many of them at the onset, by observing, that, since Jacob's dream, "the heavens have gone farther off, and become astronomical;" a fine extravagance, which the ladies and gentlemen, who had grown astronomical themselves under the preceding lecturer, felt called on to resent as an attack on their severer studies. When he read a well-known extract from Cowper, comparing a poor cottager with Voltaire, and had pronounced the line: "A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew," they broke into a joyous shout of self-gratulation, that they were so much wiser than the scornful Frenchman. When he passed by Mrs. Hannah More with observing that "she had written a great deal which he had never read," a voice gave expression to the general commiseration and surprise, by calling out, "More pity for you!" They were confounded at his reading with more emphasis, perhaps, than discretion, Gay's epigram

matic lines on Sir Richard Blackstone, in which scriptural persons are too freely hitched into rhyme; but he went doggedly on to the end, and, by his perseverance, baffled those who, if he had acknowledged himself wrong, by stopping, would have visited him with an outburst of displeasure which he felt to be gathering. He once had a more edifying advantage over them. He was enumerating the humanities which endeared Dr. Johnson to his mind, and at the close of an agreeable catalogue, mentioned, as last and noblest, "his carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back, through Fleet Street," at which a titter arose from some, who were struck by the picture as ludicrous, and a murmur from others, who deemed the allusion unfit for ears polite: he paused for an instant, and then added, in his sturdiest and most impressive manner, — "an act which realizes the parable of the Good Samaritan;" at which his moral and his delicate hearers shrunk, rebuked, into deep silence. He was not eloquent, in the true sense of the term; for his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can rouse. He wrote all his lectures, and read them as they were written; but his deep voice and earnest manner suited his matter well. He seemed to dig into his subject, and not in vain. In delivering his longer quotations, he had scarcely continuity enough for the versification of Shakspeare and Milton, "with linked sweetness long drawn out;" but he gave Pope's brilliant satire and delightful compliments, which are usually complete within the couplet, with an elegance and point which the poet himself, could he have heard, would have felt as indicating their highest praise.

Mr. Hazlitt, having suffered for many years from derangement of the digestive organs, for which perhaps a moderate use of fermented liquors would have been preferable to abstinence, solaced only by the intense tincture of tea in which he found refuge, worn out at last, died on 18th Sept., 1830, at the age of fifty-two. Lamb frequently visited him during his sufferings, which were not, as has been erroneously suggested, aggravated by the want of needful comforts; for although his careless habits had left no provision for sickness, his friends gladly acknowledged, by their united aid, the deep intellectual obligations due to the great thinker. In a moment of acute pain, when the needless apprehension for the future rushed upon him, he dictated a brief and peremptory letter to the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," requiring a considerable remittance, to which he had no claim but that of former remunerated services, which the friend, who obeyed his bidding, feared might excite displeasure; but he mistook Francis Jeffrey; the sum demanded was received by return of post, with the most anxious wishes for Hazlitt's recovery — just too late for him to understand his error. Lamb joined a few friends in attending his funeral in the churchyard of St. Anne's Soho, where he was interred, and felt his loss — not so violently at the time, as mournfully in the frequent recurrence of the sense that a chief source of intellectual pleasure was stopped. His personal frailties are nothing to us now; his thoughts survive; in them we have his better part entire, and in them must be traced his true history. The real events of his life are not to be traced in its external changes; as his engagement by the "Morning Chronicle," or his transfer of his services to the "Times," or his introduc-

tion to the "Edinburgh Review;" but in the progress and development of his fine understanding as nurtured and checked and swayed by his affections. His warfare was within; its spoils are ours!

One of the soundest and most elegant scholars whom the school of Christ's Hospital ever produced, Mr. THOMAS BARNES, was a frequent guest at Lamb's chambers in the Temple; and though the responsibilities he undertook, before Lamb quitted that, his happiest abode, prevented him from visiting often at Great Russell Street, at Islington, or Enfield, he was always ready to assist by the kind word of the powerful journal in which he became most potent, the expanding reputation of his school-mate and friend. After establishing a high social and intellectual character at Cambridge, he had entered the legal profession as a special pleader, but was prevented from applying the needful devotion to that laborious pursuit by violent rheumatic affections, which he solaced by writing critiques and essays of rare merit. So shattered did he appear in health, that when his friends learned that he had accepted the editorship of the "Times" newspaper, they almost shuddered at the attempt as suicidal, and anticipated a speedy ruin to his constitution from the pressure of constant labor and anxiety, on the least healthful hours of toil. But he had judged better than they of his own physical and intellectual resources, and the mode in which the grave responsibility and constant exertion of his office would affect both; for the regular effort consolidated his feverish strength, gave evenness and tranquillity to a life of serious exertion, and supplied, for many years, power equal to the perpetual demand; affording a striking example how, when finely attuned,

the mind can influence the body to its uses. The facile adaptation of his intellect to his new duties was scarcely less remarkable than the mastery it achieved over his desultory habits and physical infirmities; for, until then, it had seemed more refined than vigorous — more elegant than weighty — too fastidious to endure the supervision and arrangement of innumerable reports, paragraphs, and essays; but, while a scholarly grace was shed by him through all he wrote or moulded, the needful vigor was never wanting to the high office of superintending the great daily miracle; to the discipline of its various contributors; or to the composition of articles which he was always ready, on the instant of emergency, to supply.

Mr. Barnes, linked by school associations with Leigh Hunt, filled the theatrical department of criticism in the "Examiner" during the period when the Editor's imprisonment for alleged libel on the Prince Regent precluded his attendance on the theatres. It was no easy office of friendship to supply the place of Hunt in the department of criticism, he may be almost said to have invented; but Mr. Barnes, though in a different style, well sustained the attractions of the "Theatrical Examiner." Fortunately the appearance of Mr. Kean during this interval enabled him to gratify the profound enthusiasm of his nature, without doing violence to the fastidious taste to which it was usually subjected. He perceived at once the vivid energy of the new actor; understood his faults to be better than the excellences of ordinary aspirants; and hailed him with the most generous praise — the more valuable as it proceeded from one rarely induced to render applause, and never yielding it except on the conviction of true

excellence. Hazlitt, who contributed theatrical criticism, at the same time, to the "Morning Chronicle," and who astounded the tame mediocrity of Mr. Perry's subordinates by his earnest eulogy, and Barnes, had the satisfaction of first appreciating this unfriended performer, and while many were offended by the daring novelty of his style, and more stood aloof with fashionable indifference from a deserted theatre, of awakening that spirit which retrieved the fortunes of Old Drury — which revived, for a brilliant interval, the interest of the English stage, and which bore the actor on a tide of intoxicating success that "knew no retiring ebb" till it was unhappily checked by his own lamentable frailties.*

* As the essays of Mr. Barnes have never been collected, I take leave to present to the reader the conclusion of his article in the "Examiner" of February 27, 1814, on the first appearance of Mr. Kean in Richard:—

"In the heroic parts, he animated every spectator with his own feelings; when he exclaimed 'that a thousand hearts were swelling in his bosom,' the house shouted to express their accordance to a truth so nobly exemplified by the energy of his voice, by the grandeur of his mien. His death-scene was the grandest conception, and executed in the most impressive manner; it was a piece of noble poetry, expressed by action instead of language. He fights desperately: he is disarmed and exhausted of all bodily strength: he disdains to fall, and his strong volition keeps him standing: he fixes that head, full of intellectual and heroic power, directly on the enemy: he bears up his chest with an expression which seems swelling with more than human spirit: he holds his uplifted arm in calm but dreadful defiance of his conqueror. But he is but man, and he falls after this sublime effort senseless to the ground. We have felt our eyes gush on reading a passage of exquisite poetry. We have been ready to leap at sight of a noble picture, but we never felt stronger emotion, more overpowering sensations, than were kindled by the novel sublimity of this catastrophe. In matters of mere taste, there will be a difference of opinion; but here there was no room to doubt, no reason could be imprudent enough to hesitate. Every heart beat an echo responsive to this call of elevated nature, and yearned with fondness towards the man who, while he excited admiration for himself, made also his admirers glow with a warmth of conscious superiority, because they were able to appreciate such an exalted degree of excellence."

The manners of Mr. Barnes, though extremely courteous, were so reserved as to seem cold to strangers; but they were changed, as by magic, by the contemplation of moral or intellectual beauty, awakened in a small circle. I well remember him, late one evening, in the year 1816, when only two or three friends remained with Lamb and his sister, long after "we had heard the chimes at midnight," holding inveterate but delighted controversy with Lamb, respecting the tragic power of Dante as compared with that of Shakspeare. Dante was scarcely known to Lamb; for he was unable to read the original, and Cary's noble translation was not then known to him; and Barnes aspired to the glory of affording him a glimpse of a kindred greatness in the mighty Italian with that which he had conceived incapable of human rivalry. The face of the advocate of Dante, heavy when in repose, grew bright with earnest admiration as he quoted images, sentiments, dialogues, against Lamb, who had taken his own immortal stand on Lear, and urged the supremacy of the child-changed father against all the possible Ugolinos of the world. Some reference having been made by Lamb to his own exposition of Lear, which had been recently published in a magazine, edited by Leigh Hunt, under the title of "The Reflector," touched another and a tenderer string of feeling, turned a little the course of his enthusiasm the more to inflame it, and brought out a burst of affectionate admiration for his friend, then scarcely known to the world, which was the more striking for its contrast with his usually sedate demeanor. I think I see him now, leaning forward upon the little table on which the candles were just

expiring in their sockets, his fists clenched, his eyes flashing, and his face bathed in perspiration, exclaiming to Lamb, "And do I not know, my boy, that you have written about Shakspeare, and Shakspeare's own Lear, finer than any one ever did in the world, and wont I let the world know it?" He was right; there is no criticism in the world more worthy of the genius it estimates than that little passage referred to on Lear; few felt it then like Barnes; thousands have read it since, here, and tens of thousands in America; and have felt as he did; and will answer for the truth of that excited hour.

Mr. Barnes combined singular acuteness of understanding with remarkable simplicity of character. If he was skilful in finding out those who duped others, he made some amends to the world of sharpers by being abundantly duped himself. He might caution the public to be on their guard against impostors of every kind, but his heart was open to every species of delusion which came in the shape of misery. Poles — real and theatrical — refugees, pretenders of all kinds, found their way to the "Times" inner office, and though the inexorable editor excluded their lucubrations from the precious space of its columns, he rarely omitted to make them amends by large contributions from his purse. The intimate acquaintance with all the varieties of life forced on him by his position in the midst of a moving epitome of the world, which vividly reflected them all, failed to teach him distrust or discretion. He was a child in the centre of the most feverish agitations; a dupe in the midst of the quickest apprehensions; and while, with unbending pride, he repelled the slightest interference with his

high functions from the greatest quarters, he was open to every tale from the lowest which could win from him personal aid. Rarely as he was seen in his later years in Lamb's circle, he is indestructibly associated with it in the recollection of the few survivors of its elder days; and they will lament with me that the influences for good which he shed largely on all the departments of busy life, should have necessarily left behind them such slender memorials of one of the kindest, the wisest, and the best of men who have ever enjoyed signal opportunities of moulding public opinion, and who have turned them to the noblest and the purest uses.

Among Lamb's early acquaintances and constant admirers was an artist whose checkered career and melancholy death gave an interest to the recollections with which he is linked independent of that which belongs to his pictures — BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. The ruling misfortune of his life was somewhat akin to that disproportion in Hazlitt's mind to which I have adverted, but productive in his case of more disastrous results — the possession of two different faculties not harmonized into one, and struggling for mastery — in that disarrangement of the faculties in which the unproductive talent becomes not a mere negative, but neutralizes the other, and even turns its good into evil. Haydon, the son of a respectable tradesman at Plymouth, was endowed with two capacities, either of which exclusively cultivated with the energy of his disposition, might have led to fortune — the genius of a painter, and the passionate logic of a controversialist; talents scarcely capable of being blended in harmonious action except under the auspices

of prosperity such as should satisfy the artist by fame, and appease the literary combatant by triumph.

The combination of a turbulent vivacity of mind with a fine aptitude for the most serene of arts was rendered more infelicitous by the circumstances of the young painter's early career. He was destined painfully to work his way at once through the lower elements of his art and the difficulties of adverse fortune; and though by indomitable courage and unwearied industry he became master of anatomic science, of coloring, and of perspective, and achieved a position in which his efforts might be fairly presented to the notice of the world, his impetuous temperament was yet further ruffled by the arduous and complicated struggle. With boundless intellectual ambition, he sought to excel in the loftiest department of his art; and undertook the double responsibility of painting great pictures and of creating the taste which should appreciate, and enforcing the patronage which should reward them.

The patronage of high art, not then adopted by the government, and far beyond the means of individuals of the middle class, necessarily appertained to a few members of the aristocracy, who alone could encourage and remunerate the painters of history. Although the beginning of Mr. Haydon's career was not uncheered by aristocratic favor, the contrast between the greatness of his own conceptions and the humility of the course which prudence suggested as necessary to obtain for himself the means of developing them on canvas, fevered his nature, which, ardent in gratitude for the appreciation and assistance of the wealthy to a degree which might even be mistaken for servility,

was also impatient of the general indifference to the cause of which he sought to be, not only the ornament, but unhappily for him, also the champion. Alas! he there "perceived a divided duty." Had he been contented silently to paint — to endure obscurity and privation for a while, gradually to mature his powers of execution and soften the rigor of his style and of his virtue, he might have achieved works, not only as vast in outline and as beautiful in portions as those which he exhibited, but so harmonious in their excellences as to charm away opposition, and insure speedy reputation, moderate fortune, and lasting fame. But resolved to battle for that which he believed to be "the right," he rushed into a life-long contest with the Royal Academy; frequently suspended the gentle labors of the pencil for the vehement use of the pen; and thus gave to his course an air of defiance which prevented the calm appreciation of his nobler works, and increased the mischief by reaction. Indignant of the scorns "that patient merit of the unworthy takes," he sometimes fancied scorns which *impatient* merit in return imputes to the worthy; and thus, instead of enjoying the most tranquil of lives (which a painter's should be), led one of the most animated, restless, and broken. The necessary consequence of this disproportion was a series of pecuniary embarrassments, the direct result of his struggle with fortune; a succession of feverish triumphs and disappointments, the fruits of his contest with power; and worse perhaps than either, the frequent diversion of his own genius from its natural course, and the hurried and imperfect development of its most majestic conceptions. To paint as finely as he sometimes did in the ruffled pauses of his passionate

controversy, and amidst the terrors of impending want, was to display large innate resources of skill and high energy of mind; but how much more unquestionable fame might he have attained if his disposition had permitted him to be content with charming the world of art, instead of attempting also to instruct or reform it!

Mr. Haydon's course, though thus troubled, was one of constant animation, and illustrated by hours of triumph, the more radiant because they were snatched from adverse fortune and a reluctant people. The exhibition of a single picture by an artist at war with the Academy which exhibited a thousand pictures at the same price — creating a sensation not only among artists and patrons of art, but among the most secluded literary circles — and engaging the highest powers of criticism — was, itself, a splendid occurrence in life;— and, twice at least, in the instance of the Entry into Jerusalem, and the Lazarus, was crowned with signal success. It was a proud moment for the daring painter, when, at the opening of the first of these Exhibitions, while the crowd of visitors, distinguished in rank or talent, stood doubting whether in the countenance of the chief figure the daring attempt to present an aspect differing from that which had enkindled the devotion of ages — to mingle the human with the Divine, resolution with sweetness, dignified composure with the anticipation of mighty suffering — had not failed, Mrs. Siddons walked slowly up to the centre of the room, surveyed it in silence for a minute or two, and then ejaculated, in her deep, low, thrilling voice, "It is perfect!" quelled all opposition, and removed the doubt, from his own mind at least, forever.

Although the great body of artists to whose corpo-

rate power Mr. Haydon was so passionately opposed, naturally stood aside from his path, it was cheered by the attention and often by the applause of the chief literary spirits of the age, who were attracted by a fierce intellectual struggle. Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Godwin, Shelley, Hunt, Coleridge, Lamb, Keats — and many young writers for periodical works, in the freshness of unhackneyed authorship — took an interest in a course so gallant though so troublous, which excited their sympathy yet did not force them to the irksome duty of unqualified praise. Almost in the outset of his career, Wordsworth addressed to him a sonnet, in heroic strain, associating the artist's calling with his own; making common cause with him, "while the whole world seems adverse to desert;" admonishing him "still to be strenuous for the bright reward, and in the soul admit of no decay;" and, long after, when the poet had, by a wiser perseverance, gradually created the taste which appreciated his works, he celebrated, in another sonnet, the fine autumnal conception in the picture of Napoleon on the rock of St. Helena, with his back to the spectator, contemplating the blank sea, left desolate by the sunken sun. The Conqueror of Napoleon also recognized the artist's claims, and supplied him with another great subject, in the contemplation of the solitude of Waterloo by its hero, ten years after the victory.

Mr. Haydon's vividness of mind burst out in his conversation, which, though somewhat broken and rugged, like his career, had also, like that, a vein of beauty streaking it. Having associated with most of the remarkable persons of his time, and seen strange varieties of "many-colored life" — gifted with a

rapid perception of character and a painter's eye for effect, — he was able to hit off, with startling facility, sketches in words which lived before the hearer. His anxieties and sorrows did not destroy the buoyancy of his spirits or rob the convivial moment of its prosperity; so that he struggled, and toiled, and laughed, and triumphed, and failed, and hoped on, till the waning of life approached and found him still in opposition to the world, and far from the threshold of fortune. The object of his literary exertions was partially attained; the national attention had been directed to high art; but he did not personally share in the benefits he had greatly contributed to win. Even his cartoon of the Curse in Paradise failed to obtain a prize when he entered the arena with unfledged youths for competitors; and the desertion of the exhibition of his two pictures of Aristides and Nero, at the Egyptian Hall, by the public, for the neighboring exposure of the clever manikin, General Tom Thumb, quite vanquished him. It was indeed a melancholy contrast; — the unending succession of bright crowds thronging the levees of the small abortion, and the dim and dusty room in which the two latest historical pictures of the veteran hung for hours without a visitor. Opposition, abuse, even neglect he could have borne, but the sense of ridicule involved in such a juxtaposition drove him to despair. No one who knew him ever apprehended from his disasters such a catastrophe as that which closed them. He had always cherished a belief in the religion of our Church, and avowed it among scoffing unbelievers; and that belief he asserted even in the wild fragments he penned in his last terrible hour. His friends thought that even the sense of the injustice of the world would

have contributed with his undimmed consciousness of his own powers to enable him to endure. In his domestic relations also he was happy, blessed in the affection of a wife of great beauty and equal discretion, who, by gentler temper and serener wisdom than his own, had assisted and soothed him in all his anxieties and griefs, and whose image was so identified in his mind with the beautiful as to impress its character on all the forms of female loveliness he had created. Those who knew him best feel the strongest assurance, that notwithstanding the appearances of preparation which attended his extraordinary suicide, his mind was shattered to pieces — all distorted and broken — with only one feeling left entire, the perversion of which led to the deed, a hope to awaken sympathy in death for those whom living he could not shelter. The last hurried lines he wrote, entitled, "Haydon's last Thoughts," consisted of a fevered comparison between the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon, in which he seemed to wish to repair some supposed injustice which in speech or writing he had done to the Conqueror. It was enclosed in a letter addressed to three friends, written in the hour of his death, and containing sad fragmental memorials of those passionate hopes, fierce struggles, and bitter disappointments which brought him through distraction to the grave!

A visit of COLERIDGE was always regarded by Lamb as an opportunity to afford a rare gratification to a few friends, who, he knew, would prize it; and I well remember the flush of prideful pleasure which came over his face as he would hurry, on his way to the India House, into the office in which I was a pupil, and stammer out the welcome invitation for the evening. This

was true self-sacrifice; for Lamb would have infinitely preferred having his inspired friend to himself and his sister, for a brief renewal of the old Salutation delights; but, I believe, he never permitted himself to enjoy this exclusive treat. The pleasure he conferred was great; for of all celebrated persons I ever saw, Coleridge alone surpassed the expectation created by his writings; for he not only was, but appeared to be, greater than the noblest things he had written.

Lamb used to speak, sometimes with a moistened eye and quivering lip, of Coleridge when young, and wish that we could have seen him in the spring-time of his genius, at a supper in the little sanded parlor of the old Salutation hostel. The promise of those days was never realized, by the execution of any of the mighty works he planned; but the very failure gave a sort of mournful interest to the "large discourse, looking before and after," to which we were enchanted listeners; to the wisdom which lives only in our memories, and must perish with them.

From Coleridge's early works, some notion may be gleaned of what he *was;* when the steep ascent of fame rose directly before him, while he might loiter to dally with the expectation of its summit, without ignobly shrinking from its labors. His endowments at that time — the close of the last century — when literature had faded into a fashion of poor language, must have seemed, to a mind and heart like Lamb's, no less than miraculous.

A rich store of classical knowledge — a sense of the beautiful, almost verging on the effeminate — a facile power of melody, varying from the solemn stops of the organ to a birdlike flutter of airy sound — the glorious

faculty of poetic hope, exerted on human prospects, and presenting its results with the vividness of prophecy; a power of imaginative reasoning which peopled the nearer ground of contemplation with thoughts

> "All plumed like estriches, like eagles bathed,
> As full of spirit as the month of May,
> And gorgeous as the sun at Midsummer,"

endowed the author of "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel." Thus gifted, he glided from youth into manhood, as a fairy voyager on a summer sea, to eddy round and round in dazzling circles, and to make little progress, at last, towards any of those thousand mountain summits which, glorified by aërial tints, rose before him at the extreme verge of the vast horizon of his genius. "The Ancient Mariner," printed with the "Lyrical Ballads," one of his earliest works, is still his finest poem — at once the most vigorous in design and the most chaste in execution — developing the intensest human affection, amidst the wildest scenery of a poet's dream. Nothing was too bright to hope from such a dawn. The mind of Coleridge seemed the harbinger of the golden years his enthusiasm predicted and painted; — of those days of peace on earth and goodwill among men, which the best and greatest minds have rejoiced to anticipate — and the earnest belief in which is better than all frivolous enjoyments, all worldly wisdom, all worldly success. And if the noontide of his genius did not fulfil his youth's promise of manly vigor, nor the setting of his earthly life honor it by an answering serenity of greatness — they still have left us abundant reason to be grateful that the glorious fragments of his mighty and imperfect being were ours.

Cloud after cloud of German metaphysics rolled before his imagination — which it had power to irradiate with fantastic beauty, and to break into a thousand shifting forms of grandeur, though not to conquer; mist after mist ascended from those streams where earth and sky should have blended in one imagery, and were turned by its obscured glory to radiant haze; indulgence in the fearful luxury of that talismanic drug, which opens glittering scenes of fantastic beauty on the waking soul to leave it in arid desolation, too often veiled it in partial eclipse, and blended fitful light with melancholy blackness over its vast domain; but the great central light remained unquenched, and cast its gleams through every department of human knowledge. A boundless capacity to receive and retain intellectual treasure made him the possessor of vaster stores of lore, classical, antiquarian, historical, biblical, and miscellaneous, than were ever vouchsafed, at least in our time, to a mortal being; goodly structures of divine philosophy rose before him like exhalations on the table-land of that his prodigious knowledge; but, alas! there was a deficiency of the power of voluntary action which would have left him unable to embody the shapes of a shepherd's dreams, and made him feeble as an infant before the overpowering majesty of his own! Hence his literary life became one splendid and sad prospectus — resembling only the portal of a mighty temple which it was forbidden us to enter — but whence strains of rich music issuing "took the prisoned soul and lapped it in Elysium," and fragments of oracular wisdom startled the thought they could not satisfy.

Hence the riches of his mind were developed, not in writing, but in his speech — conversation I can scarcely

call it — which no one who once heard can ever forget. Unable to work in solitude, he sought the gentle stimulus of social admiration, and under its influence poured forth, without stint, the marvellous resources of a mind rich in the spoils of time — richer — richer far in its own glorious imagination and delicate fancy! There was a noble prodigality in these outpourings; a generous disdain of self; an earnest desire to scatter abroad the seeds of wisdom and beauty, to take root wherever they might fall, and spring up without bearing his name or impress, which might remind the listener of the first days of poetry before it became individualized by the press, when the Homeric rhapsodist wandered through new-born cities and scattered hovels, flashing upon the minds of the wondering audience the bright train of heroic shapes, the series of godlike exploits, and sought no record more enduring than the fleshly tablets of his hearers' hearts; no memory but that of genial tradition; when copyright did not ascertain the reciter's property, nor marble at once perpetuate and shed chillness on his fame —

> "His bounty was as boundless as the sea,
> His love as deep."

Like the ocean, in all its variety of gentle moods, his discourse perpetually ebbed and flowed, — nothing in it angular, nothing of set purpose, but now trembling as the voice of divine philosophy, "not harsh nor crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute," was wafted over the summer wave; now glistening in long line of light over some obscure subject, like the path of moonlight on the black water; and, if ever receding from the shore, driven by some sudden gust of inspiration, disclosing the treasures of the deep, like the

rich strond in Spenser, "far sunken in their sunless treasuries," to be covered anon by the foam of the same immortal tide. The benignity of his manner befitted the beauty of his disquisitions; his voice rose from the gentlest pitch of conversation to the height of impassioned eloquence without effort, as his language expanded from some common topic of the day to the loftiest abstractions; ascending by a winding track of spiral glory to the highest truths which the naked eye could discern, and suggesting starry regions, beyond, which his own telescopic gaze might possibly decipher. If his entranced hearers often were unable to perceive the bearings of his argument — too mighty for any grasp but his own — and sometimes reaching beyond his own — they understood "a *beauty* in the words, if not the words;" and a wisdom and piety in the illustrations, even when unable to connect them with the idea which he desired to illustrate. If an entire scheme of moral philosophy was never developed by him either in speaking or writing, all the parts were great: vast biblical knowledge, though sometimes eddying in splendid conjecture, was always employed with pious reverence; the morality suggested was at once elevated and genial; the charity hoped all things; and the mighty imaginative reasoner seemed almost to realize the condition suggested by the great Apostle, "that he understood all mysteries and all knowledge, and spake with the tongues both of men and angels!"

After Coleridge had found his last earthly refuge, under the wise and generous care of Mr. Gilman, at Highgate, he rarely visited Lamb, and my opportunities of observing him ceased. From those who were

more favored, as well as from the fragments I have seen of his last effusions, I know that, amidst suffering and weakness, his mighty mind concentrated its energies on the highest subjects which had ever kindled them; that the speculations, which sometimes seemed like paradox, because their extent was too vast to be comprehended in a single grasp of intellectual vision, were informed by a serener wisdom; that his perceptions of the central truth became more undivided, and his piety more profound and humble. His love for Charles and Mary Lamb continued, to the last, one of the strongest of his human affections — of which, by the kindness of a friend,* I possess an affecting memorial under his hand, written in the margin of a volume of his "Sybilline Leaves," which — after his life-long habit — he has enriched by manuscript annotations. The poem, beside which it is inscribed, is entitled "The Lime-Tree Bower my Prison," composed by the poet in June, 1796, when Charles and Mary Lamb, who were visiting at his cottage near Bristol, had left him for a walk, which an accidental lameness prevented him from sharing. The visitors are not indicated by the poem, except that Charles is designated by the epithet, against which he jestingly remonstrated, as "gentle-hearted Charles;" and is represented as "winning his way, with sad and patient soul, through evil and pain, and strange calamity." Against the title is written as follows: —

CH. & MARY LAMB,
dear to my heart, yea,
as it were, *my heart*,
S. T. C. Æt. 63. 1834.

* Mr. Richard Welsh, of Reading, editor of the Berkshire Chronicle — one of the ablest productions of the Conservative Periodical Press.

1797.
1834.

37 years!

This memorandum, which is penned with remarkable neatness, must have been made in Coleridge's last illness, as he suffered acutely for several months before he died, in July of this same year, 1834. What a space did that thirty-seven years of fond regard for the brother and sister occupy in a mind like Coleridge's, peopled with immortal thoughts which might multiply in the true time, dialled in heaven, its minutes into years!

These friends of Lamb's whom I have ventured to sketch in companionship with him, and Southey also, whom I only once saw, are all gone; — and others of less note in the world's eye have followed them. Among those of the old set who are gone, is Manning, perhaps, next to Coleridge, the dearest of them, whom Lamb used to speak of as marvellous in a *tête-à-tête*, but who, in company, seemed only a courteous gentleman, more disposed to listen than to talk. In good old age departed Admiral Burney, frank-hearted voyager with Captain Cook round the world, who seemed to unite our society with the circle over which Dr. Johnson reigned; who used to tell of school-days under the tutelage of Eugene Aram; how he remembered the gentle usher pacing the playground arm-in-arm with some one of the elder boys, and seeking relief from the unsuspected burden of his conscience by talking of strange murders, and how he, a child, had shuddered at the handcuffs on his teacher's hands when taken away in the post-chaise to prison; — the Admiral being himself the centre of a little circle

which his sister, the famous authoress of "Evelina," "Cecilia," and "Camilla," sometimes graced. John Lamb, the jovial and burly, who dared to argue with Hazlitt on questions of art; Barron Field, who with veneration enough to feel all the despised greatness of Wordsworth, had a sparkling vivacity, and, connected with Lamb by the link of Christ's Hospital associations, shared largely in his regard; Rickman, the sturdiest of jovial companions, severe in the discipline of whist as at the table of the House of Commons, of which he was the principal clerk; and Alsager, so calm, so bland, so considerate, — all are gone. These were all Temple guests — friends of Lamb's early days; but the companions of a later time, who first met in Great Russell Street, or Dalston, or Islington, or Enfield, have been wofully thinned; Allan Cunningham, stalwart of form and stout of heart and verse, a ruder Burns; Cary, Lamb's "pleasantest of clergymen," whose sweetness of disposition and manner would have prevented a stranger from guessing that he was the poet who had rendered the adamantine poetry of Dante into English with kindred power; Hood, so grave and sad and silent, that you were astonished to recognize in him the outpourer of a thousand wild fancies, the detector of the inmost springs of pathos, and the powerful vindicator of poverty and toil before the hearts of the prosperous; the Rev. Edward Irving, who, after fulfilling an old prophecy he made in Scotland to Hazlitt, that he would astonish and shake the world by his preaching, sat humbly at the feet of Coleridge to listen to wisdom, — all are gone; the forms of others associated with Lamb's circle by more accidental links

(also dead) come thronging on the memory from the mist of years — Alas; it is easier to count those that are left of the old familiar faces!

The story of the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb is now told; nothing more remains to be learned respecting it. The known collateral branches of their stock are extinct, and their upward pedigree lost in those humble tracks on which the steps of Time leave so light an impress, that the dust of a few years obliterates all trace, and affords no clue to search collaterally for surviving relatives. The world has, therefore, all the materials for judging of them which can be possessed by those, who, not remembering the delightful peculiarities of their daily manners, can only form imperfect ideas of what they were. Before bidding them a last adieu, we may be allowed to linger a little longer and survey their characters by the new and solemn lights which are now, for the first time, fully cast upon them.

Except to the few who were acquainted with the tragical occurrences of Lamb's early life, some of his peculiarities seemed strange — to be forgiven, indeed, to the excellences of his nature, and the delicacy of his genius, — but still, in themselves, as much to be wondered at as deplored. The sweetness of his character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers; but its heroic aspect was unguessed, even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits! It was not merely that he saw (which his elder brother cannot be blamed for not immediately perceiving) through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family, the

unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life; that he gave up, for her sake, all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it; not even that he did all this cheerfully, and without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining, — but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course, to his last. So far from thinking that his sacrifice of youth and love to his sister gave him a license to follow his own caprice at the expense of her feelings, even in the lightest matters, he always wrote and spoke of her as his wiser self — his generous benefactress, of whose protecting care he was scarcely worthy. How his pen almost grew wanton in her praise, even when she was a prisoner in the Asylum after the fatal attack of lunacy, his letters of the time to Coleridge show; but that might have been a mere temporary exaltation — the attendant fervor of a great exigency and a great resolution. It was not so; nine years afterwards (1805), in a letter to Miss Wordsworth, he thus dilates on his sister's excellences, and exaggerates his own frailties: —

"To say all that I know of her would be more than I think anybody could believe or even understand; and when I hope to have her well again with me, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better than I, and all my

wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me; and I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it 'was a noble trade.'"

Let it also be remembered that this devotion of the entire nature was not exercised merely in the consciousness of a past tragedy; but during the frequent recurrences of the calamity which caused it, and the constant apprehension of its terrors; and this for a large portion of life, in poor lodgings, where the brother and sister were, or fancied themselves "marked people;" where from an income incapable of meeting the expense of the sorrow without sedulous privations, he contrived to hoard, not for holiday enjoyment, or future solace, but to provide for expected distress. Of the misery attendant on this anticipation, aggravated by jealous fears lest some imprudence or error of his own should have hastened the inevitable evil, we have a glimpse in the letter to Miss Wordsworth above quoted, and which seems to have been written in reply to one which that excellent lady had addressed to Miss Lamb, and which had fallen into the brother's care during one of her sad absences.

"Your long kind letter has not been thrown away, but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday

week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have, in this case, contributed to her indisposition. But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that, for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary. But I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me!"

The constant impendency of this giant sorrow saddened to "the Lambs" even their holidays; as the journey which they both regarded as the relief and charm of the year was frequently followed by a seizure; and, when they ventured to take it, a strait-waistcoat, carefully packed by Miss Lamb herself, was their constant companion. Sad experience, at last, induced the abandonment of the annual excursion, and Lamb was contented with walks in and near London, during the interval of labor. Miss Lamb experienced, and full well understood, premonitory symptoms of the attack, in restlessness, low fever, and the inability to sleep; and, as gently as possible, prepared her brother for the duty he must soon perform; and thus, unless he could stave off the terrible separation till Sunday, obliged him to ask leave of absence from the office as if for a day's pleasure — a

bitter mockery! On one occasion Mr. Charles Lloyd met them slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both weeping bitterly, and found, on joining them, that they were taking their solemn way to the accustomed Asylum!

Will any one, acquainted with these secret passages of Lamb's history, wonder that, with a strong physical inclination for the stimulus and support of strong drinks — which man is framed moderately to rejoice in — he should snatch some wild pleasure "between the acts" (as he called them) "of his distressful drama," and that, still more, during the loneliness of the solitude created by his sister's absences, he should obtain the solace of an hour's feverish dream? That, notwithstanding that frailty, he performed the duties of his hard lot with exemplary steadiness and discretion, is indeed wonderful — especially when it is recollected that he had himself been visited, when in the dawn of manhood, with his sister's malady, the seeds of which were lurking in his frame. While that natural predisposition may explain an occasional flightiness of expression on serious matters, fruit of some wayward fancy, which flitted through his brain, without disturbing his constant reason or reaching his heart, and some little extravagances of fitful mirth, how does it heighten the moral courage by which the disease was controlled and the severest duties performed! Never surely was there a more striking example of the power of a virtuous, rather say of a pious, wish to conquer the fiery suggestions of latent insanity than that presented by Lamb's history. Nervous, tremulous, as he seemed — so slight of frame that he looked only fit for the most placid fortune —

when the dismal emergencies which checkered his life arose, he acted with as much promptitude and vigor as if he had never penned a stanza nor taken a glass too much, or was strung with herculean sinews. None of those temptations, in which misery is the most potent, to hazard a lavish expenditure for an enjoyment to be secured against fate and fortune, ever tempted him to exceed his income, when scantiest, by a shilling. He had always a reserve for poor Mary's periods of seclusion, and something in hand besides for a friend in need; — and on his retirement from the India House, he had amassed, by annual savings, a sufficient sum (invested after the prudent and classical taste of Lord Stowell, in "the elegant simplicity of the Three per Cents.") to secure comfort to Miss Lamb, when his pension should cease with him, even if the India Company, his great employers, had not acted nobly by the memory of their inspired clerk — as they did — and gave her the annuity to which a wife would have been entitled — but of which he could not feel assured. Living among literary men, some less distinguished and less discreet than those whom we have mentioned, he was constantly importuned to relieve distresses which an improvident speculation in literature produces, and which the recklessness attendant on the empty vanity of self-exaggerated talent renders desperate and merciless; — and to the importunities of such hopeless petitioners he gave too largely — though he used sometimes to express a painful sense that he was diminishing his own store without conferring any real benefit. "Heaven," he used to say, "does not owe me sixpence for all I have given, or lent (as they call it) to such impor-

tunity; I only gave it because I could not bear to refuse it; and I have done good by my weakness." On the other hand, he used to seek out occasions of devoting a part of his surplus to those of his friends whom he believed it would really serve, and almost forced loans, or gifts in the disguise of loans, upon them. If he thought one, in such a position, would be the happier for 50*l.* or 100*l.*, he would carefully procure a note for the sum, and, perhaps, for days before he might meet the object of his friendly purpose, keep the note in his waistcoat-pocket, burning in it to be produced, and, when the occasion arrived — "in the sweet of the night" — he would crumple it up in his hand and stammer out his difficulty of disposing of a little money; "I don't know what to do with it — pray take it — pray use it — you will do me a kindness if you will" — he would say; and it was hard to disoblige him! Let any one who has been induced to regard Lamb as a poor, slight, excitable, and excited being, consider that such acts as these were not infrequent — that he exercised hospitality of a substantial kind, without stint, all his life — that he spared no expense for the comfort of his sister, *there* only lavish — and that he died leaving sufficient to accomplish all his wishes for survivors — and think what the sturdy quality of his goodness must have been amidst all the heartaches and headaches of his life — and ask the virtue which has been supported by strong nerves, whether it has often produced any good to match it?

The influence of the events now disclosed may be traced in the development and direction of Lamb's faculties and tastes, and in the wild contrasts of expression which sometimes startled strangers. The literary pref-

erences disclosed in his early letters, are often inclined to the superficial in poetry and thought — the theology of Priestley, though embraced with pious earnestness — the "divine chit-chat" of Cowper — the melodious sadness of Bowles; and his own style, breathing a graceful and modest sweetness, is without any decided character. But by the terrible realities of his experience, he was turned to seek a kindred interest in the "sterner stuff" of old tragedy — to catastrophes more fearful even than his own — to the aspects of "pale passion" — to shapes of heroic daring and more heroic suffering — to the agonizing contests of opposing affections, and the victories of the soul over calamity and death, which the old English drama discloses, and in the contemplation of which he saw his own suffering nature at once mirrored and exalted. Thus, instead of admiring, as he once admired, Rowe and Otway, even Massinger seemed too declamatory to satisfy him; in Ford, Decker, Marlowe, and Webster, he found the most awful struggles of affection, and the "sad embroidery" of fancy-streaked grief, and expressed his kindred feelings in those little quintessences of criticism which are appended to the noblest scenes in his "Specimens"; and, seeking amidst the sunnier and more varied world of Shakspeare for the profoundest and most earnest passion developed there, obtained that marvellous insight into the soul of Lear which gives to his presentment of its riches almost the character of creation. On the other hand, it was congenial pastime with him to revel in the opposite excellences of Beaumont and Fletcher, who changed the domain of tragedy into fairy-land; turned all its terror and its sorrow "to favor and to prettiness"; shed the rainbow hues of sportive fancy with equal hand among

tyrants and victims, the devoted and the faithless, suffering and joy; represented the beauty of goodness as a happy accident, vice as a wayward aberration, and invoked the remorse of a moment to change them as with a harlequin's wand; unrealized the terrible, and left "nothing serious in mortality," but reduced the struggle of life to a glittering and heroic game to be played splendidly out, and quitted without a sigh. But neither Lamb's own secret griefs, nor the tastes which they nurtured, ever shook his faith in the requisitions of duty, or induced him to dally with that moral paradox to which near acquaintance with the great errors of mighty natures is sometimes a temptation. Never, either in writing or in speech, did he purposely confound good with evil. For the new theories of morals which gleamed out in the conversation of some of his friends, he had no sympathy; and, though in his boundless indulgence to the perversities and faults of those whom long familiarity had endeared to him, he did not suffer their frailties to impair his attachment to the individuals, he never palliated the frailties themselves; still less did he emblazon them as virtues.

No one, acquainted with Lamb's story, will wonder at the eccentric wildness of his mirth — his violent changes from the serious to the farcical — the sudden reliefs of the "heat-oppressed brain," and heart weighed down by the sense of ever-impending sorrow. His whim, however, almost always bordered on wisdom. It was justly said of him by Hazlitt, "His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half-a-dozen half sentences; his jests scald

like tears, and he probes a question with a play on words."

Although Lamb's conversation vibrated between the intense and the grotesque, his writings are replete with quiet pictures of the humbler scenery of middle life, touched with a graceful and loving hand. We may trace in them the experience of a nature bred up in slender circumstances, but imbued with a certain innate spirit of gentility suggesting a respect for all its moderate appliances and unambitious pleasures. The same spirit pervaded all his own domestic arrangements, so that the intensity of his affliction was ameliorated by as much comfort as satisfaction in the outward furniture of life can give to slender fortune.

The most important light, however, shed on Lamb's intellectual life by a knowledge of his true history, is that which elucidates the change from vivid religious impressions, manifested in his earlier letters, to an apparent indifference towards immortal interests and celestial relations, which he confesses in a letter to Mr. Walter Wilson.* The truth is, not that he became an unbeliever, or even a skeptic, but that the peculiar disasters in which he was plunged, and the tendency of his nature to seek immediate solaces, induced an habitual reluctance to look boldly into futurity. That conjugal love, which anticipates with far-looking eye prolonged existence in posterity, was denied to his self-sacrifice; irksome labor wearied out the heart of his days; and over his small household, Madness, like Death in the vision of Milton, continually "shook its dart," and only, at the best, "delayed to strike." Not daring to look onward, even for a little month, he ac-

* Page 192.

quired the habitual sense of living entirely in the present; enjoying with tremulous zest the security of the moment, and making some genial, but sad, amends for the want of all the perspective of life, by cleaving, with fondness, to its nearest objects, and becoming attached to them, even when least interesting in themselves.

This perpetual grasping at transient relief from the minute and vivid present, associated Lamb's affections intimately and closely with the small details of daily existence; these became to him the "jutting frieze" and "coigne of vantage" in which his home-bred fancy "made its bed and procreant cradle;" these became imbued with his thoughts, and echoed back to him old feelings and old loves, till his inmost soul shivered at the prospect of being finally wrenched from them. Enthralled thus in the prison of an earthly home, he became perplexed and bewildered at the idea of an existence which, though holier and happier, would doubtless be entirely different from that to which he was bound by so many delicate films of custom. "Ah!" he would say, "we shall have none of these little passages of this life hereafter — none of our little quarrels and makings-up — no questionings about sixpence at whist;" and, thus repelled, he clung more closely to "the bright minutes" which he strung "on the thread of keen domestic anguish!" It is this intense feeling of the "nice regards of flesh and blood;" this dwelling in petty felicities; which makes us, apart from religious fears, unwilling to die. Small associations make death terrible, because we know, that parting with this life, we part from their company; whereas great thoughts make death less fearful, because we feel that they will be our companions in all worlds, and

link our future to our present being in all ages. Such thoughts assuredly were not dead in a heart like Lamb's; they were only veiled by the nearer presences of familiar objects, and sometimes, perhaps, bursting in upon him in all their majesty, produced those startling references to sacred things, in which, though not to be quoted with approval, there was no conscious profaneness, but rather a wayward, fitful, disturbed piety. If, indeed, when borne beyond the present, he sought to linger in the past; to detect among the dust and cobwebs of antiquity, beauty, which had lurked there from old time, rather than to "rest and expatiate in a life to come," no anti-Christian sentiment spread its chillness over his spirit. The shrinking into mortal life was but the weakness of a nature which shed the sweetness of the religion of its youth through the sorrows and the snatches of enjoyment which crowded his after-years, and only feebly perceived its final glories, which, we may humbly hope, its immortal part is now enjoying.

Shortly before his death, Lamb had borrowed of Mr. Cary, Phillips's "Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum," which, when returned by Mr. Moxon, after the event, was found with the leaf folded down at the account of Sir Philip Sydney. Its receipt was acknowledged by the following lines: —

"So should it be, my gentle friend;
Thy leaf last closed at Sydney's end.
Thou, too, like Sydney, wouldst have given
The water, thirsting and near heaven;
Nay, were it wine, fill'd to the brim,
Thou hadst looked hard, but given, like him.

And art thou mingled then among
Those famous sons of ancient song?
And do they gather round, and praise
Thy relish of their nobler lays?

Waxing in mirth to hear thee tell
With what strange mortals thou didst dwell.
At thy quaint sallies more delighted,
Than any's long among them lighted!

'Tis done: and thou hast joined a crew,
To whom thy soul was justly due;
And yet I think, where'er thou be,
They'll scarcely love thee more than we." *

Little could any one, observing Miss Lamb in the habitual serenity of her demeanor, guess the calamity in which she had partaken, or the malady which frightfully checkered her life. From Mr. Lloyd, who, although saddened by impending delusion, was always found accurate in his recollection of long past events and conversations, I learned that she had described herself, on her recovery from the fatal attack, as having experienced, while it was subsiding, such a conviction that she was absolved in heaven from all taint of the deed in which she had been the agent — such an assurance that it was a dispensation of Providence for good, though so terrible — such a sense, that her mother knew her entire innocence, and shed down blessings upon her, as though she had seen the reconcilement in solemn vision — that she was not sorely afflicted by the recollection. It was as if the old Greek notion, of the necessity for the unconscious shedder of blood, else polluted though guiltless, to pass through a religious purification, had, in her case, been happily accomplished; so that, not only was she without remorse, but without other sorrow than attends on the death of an infirm parent in a good old age. She never shrank

* These lines, characteristic both of the writer and the subject, are copied from the Memoir of the translator of Dante, by his son, the Rev. Henry Cary, which, enriched by many interesting memorials of contemporaries, presents as valuable a picture of rare ability and excellence as ever was traced by the fine observation of filial love.

from alluding to her mother, when any topic connected with her own youth made such a reference, in ordinary respects, natural; but spoke of her as though no fearful remembrance was associated with the image; so that some of her most intimate friends, who knew of the disaster, believed that she had never become aware of her own share in its horrors. It is still more singular that, in the wanderings of her insanity, amidst all the vast throngs of imagery she presented of her early days, this picture never recurred, or, if ever, not associated with shapes of terror.

Miss Lamb would have been remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition, the clearness of her understanding, and the gentle wisdom of all her acts and words, even if these qualities had not been presented in marvellous contrast with the distraction under which she suffered for weeks, latterly for months, in every year. There was no tinge of insanity discernible in her manner to the most observant eye; not even in those distressful periods when the premonitory symptoms had apprised her of its approach, and she was making preparations for seclusion. In all its essential sweetness, her character was like her brother's; while, by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enabled to guide, to counsel, to cheer him, and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity, from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say, that he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one thoroughly reasonable — the sole exception being Mary Lamb. She did not wish, however, to

be made an exception, to a general disparagement of her sex; for in all her thoughts and feelings she was most womanly — keeping, under even undue subordination, to her notion of a woman's province, intellect of rare excellence, which flashed out when the restraints of gentle habit and humble manner were withdrawn by the terrible force of disease. Though her conversation in sanity was never marked by smartness or repartee, seldom rising beyond that of a sensible quiet gentlewoman appreciating and enjoying the talents of her friends, it was otherwise in her madness. Lamb, in his letter to a female friend, announcing his determination to be entirely with her, speaks of her pouring out memories of all the events and persons of her younger days; but he does not mention, what I am able from repeated experiences to add, that her ramblings often sparkled with brilliant description and shattered beauty. She would fancy herself in the days of Queen Anne or George the First, and describe the brocaded dames and courtly manners, as though she had been bred among them, in the best style of the old comedy. It was all broken and disjointed, so that the hearer could remember little of her discourse; but the fragments were like the jewelled speeches of Congreve, only shaken from their setting. There was sometimes even a vein of crazy logic running through them, associating things essentially most dissimilar, but connecting them by a verbal association in strange order. As a mere physical instance of deranged intellect, her condition was, I believe, extraordinary; it was as if the finest elements of mind had been shaken into fantastic combinations like those of a kaleidoscope; — but not for the purpose of exhibiting a curious phe-

nomenon of mental aberration are the aspects of her insanity unveiled, but to illustrate the moral force of gentleness by which the faculties that thus sparkled when restraining wisdom was withdrawn, were subjected to its sway, in her periods of reason.

The following letter from Miss Lamb to Miss Wordsworth, on one of the chief external events of Lamb's history, the removal from the Temple to Covent Garden, will illustrate the cordial and womanly strain of her observation on the occurrences of daily life, and afford a good idea of her habitual conversation among her friends.

"My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure, the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

"We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome; and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us; and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle: Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our

front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

* * * * *

" Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me, — in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends, and could not be comforted, — then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable, — yet when I was at Brighton, last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. M——, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played

truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery: certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of, — for like as is the case in the neighborhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. M—— could accomplish.

"God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

"I am ever yours most affectionately,

"M. Lamb."

Of that deeper vein of sentiment in Mary Lamb, seldom revealed, the following passages from a letter to the same lady, referring to the death of a brother of her beloved correspondent, may be offered as a companion specimen.

"My dear Miss Wordsworth, — I thank you, my kind friend, for your most comfortable letter; till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it; but I always left off dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind and sweet memory of

the dead, which you so happily describe as now almost begun; but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affection would in time become a constant part, not only of their dream, but of their most wakeful sense of happiness. That you would see every object with and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well knew, from my own experience in sorrow; but till you yourself began to feel this I did not dare tell you so; but I send you some poor lines which I wrote under this conviction of mind, and before I heard Coleridge was returning home. I will transcribe them now, before I finish my letter, lest a false shame prevent me then, for I know they are much worse than they ought to be, written, as they were, with strong feeling, and on such a subject; every line seems to me to be borrowed, but I had no better way of expressing my thoughts, and I never have the power of altering or amending anything I have once laid aside with dissatisfaction.

"Why is he wandering on the sea?—
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.
By slow degrees he'd steal away
Their woe, and gently bring a ray
(So happily he'd time relief)
Of comfort from their very grief.
He'd tell them that their brother dead,
When years have passed o'er their head,
Will be remembered with such holy,
True, and perfect melancholy,
That ever this lost brother John
Will be their heart's companion.
His voice they'll always hear,
His face they'll always see;
There's nought in life so sweet
As such a memory."

The excellence of Mary Lamb's nature was happily developed in her portion of those books for children — "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best," — which she wrote, in conjunction with her brother, the "Poetry for Children," the "Tales from Shakspeare," and "Mrs. Leicester's School." How different from the stony nutriment provided for those delicate, apprehensive, affectionate creatures, in the utilitarian books, which starve their little hearts, and stuff their little heads with shallow science, and impertinent facts, and selfish morals! One verse, which she did not print — the conclusion of a little poem supposed to be expressed in a letter by the son of a family who, when expecting the return of its father from sea, received news of his death, — recited by her to Mr. Martin Burney, and retained in his fond recollection, may afford a concluding example of the healthful wisdom of her lessons: —

"I can no longer feign to be
A thoughtless child in infancy;
I tried to write like young Marie,
But I am James, her brother;
And I can feel — but she's too young —
Yet blessings on her prattling tongue,
She sweetly soothes my mother."

Contrary to Lamb's expectation, who feared (as also his friends feared with him) the desolation of his own survivorship, which the difference of age rendered probable, Miss Lamb survived him for nearly eleven years. When he died, she was mercifully in a state of partial estrangement, which, while it did not wholly obscure her mind, deadened her feelings, so that as she gradually regained her perfect senses she felt as gradually the full force of the blow, and was the better able calmly to bear it. For awhile she declined the impor-

tunities of her friends, that she would leave Edmonton for a residence nearer London, where they might more frequently visit her. *He* was there, asleep in the old churchyard, beneath the turf near which they had stood together, and had selected for a resting-place; to this spot she used, when well, to stroll out mournfully in the evening, and to this spot she would contrive to lead any friend who came in the summer evenings to drink tea and went out with her afterwards for a walk.* At length, as her illness became more frequent, and her frame much weaker, she was induced to take up her abode under genial care, at a pleasant house in St. John's Wood, where she was surrounded by the old books and prints, and was frequently visited by her reduced number of surviving friends. Repeated attacks of her malady weakened her mind, but she retained to the last her sweetness of disposition unimpaired, and gently sunk into death on the 20th May, 1847.

A few survivors of the old circle, now sadly thinned, attended her remains to the spot in Edmonton church-

* The following Sonnet, by Mr. Moxon, written at this period of tranquil sadness in Miss Lamb's life, so beautifully embodies the reverential love with which the sleeping and the mourning were regarded by one of their nearest friends, that I gratify myself by extracting it from the charming little volume of his Sonnets, which it adorns:—

Here sleeps, beneath this bank, where daisies grow,
The kindliest sprite earth holds within her breast;
In such a spot I would this frame should rest,
When I to join my friend far hence shall go.
His only mate is now the minstrel lark,
Who chants her morning music o'er his bed,
Save she who comes each evening, ere the bark
Of watch-dog gathers drowsy folds, to shed
A sister's tears. Kind Heaven, upon her head,
Do thou in dovelike guise thy spirit pour,
And in her aged path some flowerets spread
Of earthly joy, should Time for her in store
Have weary days and nights, ere she shall greet
Him whom she longs in Paradise to meet.

yard, where they were laid above those of her brother. With them was one friend of later days — but who had become to Lamb as one of his oldest companions, and for whom Miss Lamb cherished a strong regard — Mr. John Forster, the author of "The Life of Goldsmith," in which Lamb would have rejoiced, as written in a spirit congenial with his own. In accordance with Lamb's own feeling, so far as it could be gathered from his expressions on a subject to which he did not often, or willingly, refer, he had been interred in a deep grave, simply dug, and wattled round, but without any affectation of stone or brickwork to keep the human dust from its kindred earth. So dry, however, is the soil of the quiet churchyard that the excavated earth left perfect walls of stiff clay, and permitted us just to catch a glimpse of the still untarnished edges of the coffin in which all the mortal part of one of the most delightful persons who ever lived was contained, and on which the remains of her he had loved with love "passing the love of woman" were henceforth to rest; — the last glances we shall ever have even of that covering; — concealed from us as we parted by the coffin of the sister. We felt, I believe, after a moment's strange shuddering, that the reunion was well accomplished; and although the true-hearted son of Admiral Burney, who had known and loved the pair we quitted from a child, and who had been among the dearest objects of existence to him, refused to be comforted, — even he will now join the scanty remnant of their friends in the softened remembrance that "they were lovely in their lives," and own with them the consolation of adding, at last, "that in death they are not divided!"

END OF VOL. II.

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